Correspondence ID: 1 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Kramer Translation Business
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent,

My family and I love visiting Yosemite, and I would like to offer some ideas to reduce traffic congestion in the park. Yous should expand your fleet of buses because your current system can be as crowded as any major city bus. In addition, you should develop a shuttle system similar to the shuttle in Devil's Postpile except the shuttle whould be voluntary and offer free entrance to encourage ridership. Families with children and old people need their cars to safely visit the park.

I would establish staging areas where people could park their cars and take the shuttle. El Portal would be an obvious spot. Perhaps the parking area at Badger Pass could be another for people entering from Fresno. Most people would continue from Wawona, so you could build an entrance station at the Glacier Point turn off. I'm not sure where you could place a parking area on teh Hwy 120 entrance.

I'm sure you could subcontract additional weekend and summer bus service with local school districts and regional bus companies like Merced Bus. They could use the additional revenue to help relieve park congestion. They key is offering free entrance to riders. I'm sure many young people and others would love contributing to a less congested park. My wife and I are empty nesters, and we'd love to ride on the free shuttle even though we always purchase a nationwide yearly park pass.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 2 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: We desperately need more campgrounds in the valley!!! Lower, Upper and North Pines are just not enough sites for the people wanted to visit the park especially in the summer months! On February 15th only after 2 or 3 minutes ALL valley campsites are sold out. All of them!!! What dose that tell you? It's ridiculous trying to get reservation for campsites in the valley during the summer! I have been coming to Yosemite all my life (over 50 years) and there seems to be less and less campsites and it seems to be harder and harder to get a site.

I do like the present reservation system, but MORE sites are needed!!!

We want more campsites in teh valley please!!!!!

Also some "group" sites in the valley would be nice too!!!! What about some gruop sites down near El Cap?????

Renovate and re-open the "RIVER" campgrounds!!!!!

Correspondence ID: 3 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Feb,01,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Traffic congestion and air pollution from too many automobiles are threatening to ruin the experience for everyone visiting Yosemite National Park.

I urge you to provide leadership to reduce the number of automobiles entering the Park by working to provide public transportation from nearby communities on the west side and ski resort parking lots on the eastern Sierra when Tioga Pass is open. Inside the Park improved shuttle service along the Tioga Pass raod and especially in Yosemite Valley would help alleviate congestion, air pollution, and the need to pave over natural areas for parking lots. This service should be free to anyone under 18 in order to avoid it being cost prohibitive to families. It needs to run 24 hours per day when the roads are open.

Correspondence ID: 4 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Yosemite means a lot to me. As one who has visited Yosemite's backcountry nearly every year since 1950, I write to express my hopes of a better Yosemite.

The procedure to make improvements in Yosemite has become exceptionally expensive. It seems as if the planning for projects is taking very long periods of time and very large amounts of money. This causes some of us supporters to question any future financial support.

Specifically, consider the Merced River Plan which has been in the planning stage forever. The cost is now supposedly $68,000,000 and not much construction has occurred. That is a huge amount of time and money.

More familiar to me is another project, the Tenaya Lake Improvement Plan. The cost for only Phase 1 is $842,755. It has been a real puzzle for my friends and me to understand how the amount of work could possible cost so much. Investigation showed that a whopping $600,000 of this is spent on planning. This is 64% on top of your own organizations' overhead costs. To many supporters of Yosemite, this is a ridiculously high amount. The planning documents are hundreds of pages long and well written, but are they all truly necessary?

Please believe that there are limits on how much the public will pay to get results. The percentage of funds actually applied to do the projects is shameful. Any funds given to Yosemite now have little impact because of the Park's inefficiencies.

I write to strongly request you find ways to reduce the overhead, bureacracy, time, and effort now required to get things done. Any company doing this would have been out of business long ago. make more effective use of our funds. Streamline your procedures.

This country is in a lingering recession. Many charities are in dire need of funds. most of them use the funds efficiently. Yes, I know there are obvious differences between your large park and smaller charities. But some charities are large, with more employees and activities than Yosemite. Many people won't donate to charities whose overhead exceeds 20%. Yet, the Tenaya Lake Plan has 64% overhead. You are competing with charities and State Parks which truly need financial support and utilize it far better than Yosemite does. Recessions cause shortages of funds which normally result in improved operations. If you really needed funds, you would not waste them in this way.

Please realize that there are always many older people like me nearing the ends of our lives who are considering legacies. If Yosemite's use of funds is this bad, Yosemite is not attractive to us; our funds would have little impact on Park improvements.

There are many more ways to use you $9000,000 which would do more good than spending $6000,000 to plan a $300,000 project. have either of you ever driven through the campground or used a restroom in Tuolumne Meadows? They have been deplorable for decades. They are a shame to our citizens and especially to foreign visitors. A well spent $50,000 would do wonders there.

Only to a limited extent is the name "Yosemite" a magical word to which donors give without question. Please find better ways to handle our hard earned money. A 36% utilization rate is poor; our money is being wasted. Streamline your procedures or your donated funds will dry up.

My comments are made privately to you now, but can easily become available to others via the Internet.

I look forward to your replies.

Correspondence ID: 5 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Sowby Family Foundation Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,21,2012 13:29:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes

Topic Question 2: I prefer Alternative 4 or 5

Topic Question 3: It is apparent that Alternatives 1 and 2 will destroy the park experience that we have enjoyed for so many years. We have stayed in Housekeeping Camp for 5 days every year for the past 35 years. If alternative 1 or 2 is approved, that experience will be gone for our children and grandchildren.

Comments: Thanks printing such a nice document and allowing comment.

Correspondence ID: 6 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,21,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes

Topic Question 7: I am for Alternative Concept 5. We enjoy the beauty of Yosemite and need the opportunity for our grandchildren to see it! Enough of the campgrounds have already been taken away.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 7 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,22,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Numbers in Management Specifics do not match numbers in overview

Topic Question 3: Numbers in Management Specifics do not match numbers in overview

Topic Question 4: Numbers in Management Specifics do not match numbers in overview

Topic Question 5: Numbers in Management Specifics do not match numbers in overview

Topic Question 6: Numbers in Management Specifics do not match numbers in overview

Topic Question 7: Alternative 3

Topic Question 8: Wouldn't removal of concession employees and operations to el portal create additional traffic concerns?

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 8 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: NatureBridge Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,28,2012 17:18:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I like the idea of having less lodging and lots of restoration. I'm worried that in general most people will see the changes and too much though... The only part that I am concerned about myself is that permits would be required to enter the park. Instead of requiring all visitor to acquire a permit, could it be possible to require people to purchase permits just for personal vehicles? This would reduce the number of vehicular congestion in the park but would allow more people into the park. All other people could be welcome to come visit the park, but they would have to park their cars in Mariposa or Oakhurst and then take a regularly scheduled bus into the valley. Another alternative could be to have Yosemite traffic managed similarly to the Mariposa Grove, where when the parking lot is at full capacity, drivers are turned away to find other parking and then encouraged to ride the bus up to the grove. Could there be a daily limit to the number of vehicles allowed in the park? Then all other visitors could wait around to see if spots opens up, or just take the bus.

Topic Question 3: I think that anybody that can afford to bring an RV into the park can afford to pay for a room at a hotel where impact is more concentrated. If the reasoning behind more camping is to give people with lower income the ability to stay in Yosemite Valley, then it should be tent camping that in increased, not RV camping. Once again, requiring people to acquire a permit to enter Yosemite Valley seems a bit much to me.

Topic Question 4: I think that concept three is the most reasonable plan. My concern though it with the increase in camping. I feel that while there are few permanent structures in a campground, there is an huge amount of impact on a very large area. I think it has a much larger impact than a hotel, which can concentrate its use in a smaller area. If camping is increased I would only want to see camp 4 style concentrated camping in already existing camp grounds. I would like to see RV campsites reduced as anyone driving an RV can afford to stay at a hotel. The thought of seeing campgrounds extend all the way from lower pines to close to happy isles does not make me happy. I also am very concerned about the amount of smoke that will be added to our valley by the additional campfires.

Topic Question 5: Lets remove housekeeping camp, expand camp four camping and concentrate camping in preexisting campgrounds.

Topic Question 6: If all other concepts fail, at least there will be some restoration.

Topic Question 7: something between concept three and four. Limiting vehicles, and reducing structures and restoring riparian areas and river corridors should of top priority.

Topic Question 8: permits make me concerned.

Topic Question 9: Permits for vehicles, not individuals.

Comments: can we get rid of the kennels please! People can kennel their dogs outside of the park and the dogs in the kennel bark incessantly. Not a necessary building.

Correspondence ID: 9 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,29,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: This concept sounds best to me. The more restoration and less human invasion the better. Some people might complain about the reduced vehicle/visitor capacity of the Valley, but I think this reduced capacity will serve to benefit all who visit the Valley -- the amount of vehicles and crowds during peak season now detract from the experience. Also, this might encourage people to visit Yosemite during non-peak seasons and to visit other parts of Yosemite.

Topic Question 9: I don't understand why visitors need vehicles in the Valley at all. The current summer conditions are probably causing John Muir to turn in his grave. Ideally, visitors should be required to take a shuttle into the Valley from outside of the park. I know some may see me as a ranting lunatic -- but I am speaking from my experiences visiting the park since my childhood and from my experiences as a national park ranger at Acadia National Park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 10 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: [redacted] Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,29,2012 18:53:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, I believe they do. I suggest keeping in mind flexibility in the planning (e.g. be allowed to try and tweak different management tactics to reduce visitor numbers, depending on what does and doesn't work)

Topic Question 2: Adding RV loop is a good idea, but there should also be several tent-only loops. Communal campfires in all new campgrounds and Camp4 (see Comments)

Removing bicycle concessions will encourage traffic. (see Comments)

There need to be alternatives for people who do not have a day use entry permit - for example, have early morning be unrestricted (see Comments). Reintroduce bus options, even if inconveniently located (e.g. Gin Flat? Badger Pass?) and pay for it with parking permit fee.

Topic Question 3: Adding RV loop is a good idea, but there should also be several tent-only loops. Communal campfires in all new campgrounds and Camp4 (see Comments)

Removing bicycle concessions will encourage traffic. (see Comments)

Pedestrian Underpass is a good idea at the lodge!

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Topic Question 4: Develop more WALK-IN and TENT ONLY rather than drive in camping. RV loop okay Communal campfires in all new campgrounds and Camp4 (see Comments)

Pedestrian Underpass is a good idea at the lodge!

Topic Question 5: Develop more WALK-IN and TENT ONLY rather than drive in camping. RV loop okay Communal campfires in all new campgrounds and Camp4 (see Comments)

I dislike parking in West Yosemite Valley except near Pohono Pit.

Topic Question 6: Develop more WALK-IN and TENT ONLY rather than drive in camping. RV loop okay Communal campfires in all new campgrounds and Camp4 (see Comments)

I dislike parking in West Yosemite Valley except near Pohono Pit.

Topic Question 7: alternative 2, with a few exception (e.g. keep the pedestrian underpass, and have a strong emphasis on providing alternatives for people who are unpermitted for day use, either with bussing or unrestricted hours)

Topic Question 8: Alt 5 - development of west valley parking significantly impacts the current conditions. unless in pohono pit.

Comments: New Campground, Campfires, and Firewood New campgrounds are being proposed and some designs have a lower impact than others. For example, walk-in campgrounds will have a smaller footprint (or higher density) than drive-up campgrounds and should be strongly considered (adding benefits = less RV congestion, no generators)

A significant amount of firewood is brought into the valley and has a strong potential to introduce invasive forest pests, which would be a negative impact on a Wild and Scenic River segment. One way of managing this problem is to reduce the demand/desire for external firewood, and it would be best to reduce this demand via incentives (rather than regulation). A couple of suggestions to reduce the demand for firewood in new campgrounds are: ? Have communal firepits in all new campgrounds and also Camp 4 in lieu of individual firepits ? e.g. each firepit serves multiple sites in a convenient manner to reduce the overall demand for wood. ? Provide cheap or free local firewood at the communal sites. One possible source is from the wood that is already removed and available for firewood. ? Additional benefits: better air quality, smaller overall footprint, meeting the neighbors, etc.

Restricted Access to Yosemite Valley Restricting the number of people allowed into Yosemite Valley is probably necessary given the current problems of traffic and overcrowding on busy days. Having said that, I strongly feel there has to be some alternative for people who do not have a parking permit, nor do I feel it would be a good use of LEO resources to have them handing out parking tickets. Here are some suggestions: ? Allow unpermitted access to the Yosemite Valley during off hours: for example before 7am and after 6pm each day. This allows early bird recreationists and first-come-first-served campers to enter the valley without adding to traffic problems. (These hours should be subject to change if they are not working!) ? Charging for access (permit) from 7am-6pm. $20/car x 5000 cars/day = $100,000 a day - > $10 million/summer season (NOT entrance fee, this is extra). I know bussing is NOT part of this plan, however I think the money raised could be used to pay for an alternative for lower income or less informed visitors (an inconvenient bus from Badger Pass or Gin Flat sure beats not being allowed to visit the valley at all after a multi-houred trip!) ? Charging for parking access could also be used to subsidize OTHER transportation related issues. See ? bicycling.

Bicycling I think that the elimination of rental bicycles is possibly a bad idea since bicycling may eliminate some of the traffic. Having said that, I strongly support managing the bicycling differently, perhaps even encouraging it by making it cheaper. Here are two suggestions: ? NPS gives out free bicycles and has check-in / check-out kiosks, complete with waiver forms. Helmets should be available too. ? The "concession" for the bicycling is given to a non-profit (Yosemite Conservancy???), which is run similar to urban bike-sharing programs (e.g. $5/day to join, 30 minutes free, and after 30 minutes you are charged. Automatic check-in/out with your credit card once you are a member). Helmets should be provided.

Roadside Parking Roadside parking access is a boon for dispersing crowds and does not add a significant impact since the road already exists. I suggest some wooden fencing be added to discourage pedestrians from wandering into sensitive areas such as meadows. Fencing already exists along parts of the river, for example, near Lower Brother.

River Use I like the idea that floating the river is NOT being restricted in the MRP. There are many Wild and Scenic Rivers that allow floating and paddling. I strongly agree that commercial rafting and rental should be discontinued (or heavily restricted) due to bank erosion issues of too many people and watercraft in the river. Private boating should still be allowed on all segments of the river and plans to provide clear access points is a great idea. I suggest that the "take-out" preceding any whitewater segment be large and very well signed, but I do NOT suggest prohibiting whitewater travel. There is plenty of precedent for Wild and Scenic whitewater paddling. Whitewater access organization (for example, American Whitewater) would be willing to be involved with access issues and appropriate signage.

Ice Rink I'm not sure this is necessary to remove. It only runs at the times of the year when visitor numbers are low, and can be set up in existing parking lots (e.g. convert parking -> rink) without having a footprint.

Correspondence ID: 11 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,02,2012 13:03:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Under everything the rafting is a big problem,the banks of the Merced River is full of trash from the rafters. It a nice experance to see this on mwalks along the river.There once was a law on the books that no rafitng will take place on the Merced with-in Yosemite Valley, but we all understand that money is more important then the enviroment along the Merced River. If one removes a rock it changes the hydroligyof the river, just look at Sentinel Beach the beach is compacted by use of rafters nice,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 12 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,02,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 7: My main concern are the impacts of commercialized uses, and high-impact stock use, and the Park Service's ongoing extreme bias in favor of such commercialized uses. The commercial horse stables in the Valley are a nuisance, the animals pollute trails and water, and ruin my walking experience. The former Valley Plan called for elimination of the stables, yet NPS dragged its feet and did not follow through. All horse stables should be removed from the Valley, and no commercialized stock use allowed. Also the ugly, elitist, and polluting High Sierra Camp at Merced Lake should be removed. These things should be common to nearly all of your alternatives, not just included in a token fringe alternative that will never be seriously considered by decision-makers. The NPS planning process is so transparent: create a few fringe alternatives at the ends of the spectrum, and then choose business-as-usual in the middle. Shame on you.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 13 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,02,2012 16:41:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have a question about your plans for the High Sierra Merced Lake Camp. It says "The High Sierra Merced Lake Backpackers' Camp would remain" in Concepts 3 & 4 & 5.

DOES THAT INCLUDE THE TENT CABINS/KITCHEN/BATHROOM? I want them to remain. Last summer, for the first time I was able to hike the High Sierra Loop (I'm 70 & not a backpacker with tent & related equipment). It was wonderful and I hope that it will be kept open for others like me. It was the first time I had been able to experience the beauty of the high country between Volgelsang & Sunrise. I could not have done it without the Lake Merced HSC.

[I will be attending the meeting in Wawona on April 13th if at all possible.]

Correspondence ID: 14 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am just writing that I think that it would be an excellent to allow paddling on all sections of the Merced River. Also, I think that it is imperative for the preservation of the resources to use a permitting system to ensure that there is not any overuse issue. I also believe that it would be detrimental to allow commercial boating.

Thanks,

Correspondence ID: 15 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,03,2012 13:29:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, there is a wide range

Topic Question 2: This would be controversial, but in the spirit of the park's heralded hero, John Muir, to its more recent champion, David Brower, this option takes a bold and principled stand on behalf of the long-term enjoyment and sustainability of the wilds and treasure that is Yosemite.

Topic Question 3: This option would be acceptable as well, since it lowers visitorship and values the resiliency of the park. One thing I was surprised to learn that may be a useful story to tell if parking and lodging do contract as per this option is that on 67 of the 100 busies days last year, the park was oversubscribed for parking and cars. It took three hours for a car to make a loop through the valley. Probably a lot of those people didn't even get out of their cars. This not only negates the argument that visiting Yosemite, even if it's crowded, inspires one with nature, but it lessens the experience of the other visitors who did find parking and whose views and experience is tainted by the sound and smell and visuals of cars everywhere. Quality of quantity.

Topic Question 4: This option would be acceptable as well as it lowers the number of visitors and cars, again with the quality of quantity argument, and values the natural treasures of the park over allowing as many people as possible in.

Topic Question 6: Absolutely not, this option values the business of a park over the river's health, public safety with flooding and rock fall areas, and air quality.

Topic Question 7: Option 1, with Option 2 acceptable as well. These two take a bold and principled stand on behalf of the long-term enjoyment and sustainability of the wilds and treasure that comprise Yosemite. Aside from management of the river, these options are important on behalf of air quality, park enjoyment, and responsible visitorship.

Topic Question 8: Options 4 and 5 seem as if the take the stance of Yosemite as a profit enterprise, trying to get as many visitors in as possible, without regard to the quality of experience that they have once in the park because of all of the other oversubscribed visitors.

Comments: Yosemite can be a leader to other parks in the US and its sister parks and others throughout the world by pulling back on uncontrolled visitorship and development and taking a stance that a quality experience in wilderness is worth waiting for, even if that means that reservations must be made and fewer people visit during peak times each year. It's also an economical decision because the fewer visitors at one time mean less of a management burden on the park. The river will also have a chance to recover and from a public safety point of view, Options 1 and 2 are best.

Correspondence ID: 16 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,03,2012 16:09:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 7: I prefer alternative 5 because it would allow more people to enjoy Yosemite. I tried to get camping reservations this year at 7:00 a.m. on the opening date for a time period, but at 20 seconds after 7 a.m., everything I tried was taken. I realize that too many people are a problem, but I think the camping and lodging is limited enough now.

Comments: I would love to see some areas where artists could paint along the river. Several view spots are no longer available. I teach art in the Yosemite Conservancy program, and I wish for more places where I could paint or take a class to paint. The walkways are helpful to move people across the meadows. Would it be possible to have some walkways and a platform for artists or for people who just want to sit along the river? Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 17 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: HighSierraTopix.com Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 8: I do not understand why you would be considering closing/ making smaller the Valley backpacker camp. Where else do you want a legitimate backpacker to stay for that entry night?...or the night afterwards? If you are going to tout Yosemite's 900 miles of trails, how does closing off access by elimination of low impact backpacker housing make any sense? With all the talk of wilderness, why would you even consider making things harder for a backpacker? I thought that you wanted to get away from cars in the Valley? As an administrator of a backpacking website - HighSierraTopix.com - I can assure you that 7000+ backpackers agree with me. Keep the Valley backpacker site open! Mark

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 18 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,04,2012 13:20:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I didn't see anything addressing alternatives to the camping or usage situation in Little Yosemite Valley. I think if you're going to consider removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, then something should be done to modify or protect the river from over usage in Little Yosemite Valley. Although there are no permanent structures beyond the campground restrooms, it is a major campground. I've always felt it was one of the most unpleasant places in the park. It's a dust bowl, and and the banks or the river are trampled. From my experience, the usage and impact of the campground at LYV is three times that of the high camp further up river.

Topic Question 8: Removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp raises concerns to me. First, it is a cultural and historic landmark, both for Native history and the cavalry and park history. Second, it's a special place for backcountry users. And it's a good place to have them. If we get rid of it, I worry about where those users will stay, as in will it spread out the usage to other places with more sensitivity; that cannot handle that usage. Would Echo Valley get overrun? Would Washburn Lake get overused as a result? The Park Service has been working on restoration at Merced Lake HSC for ten years now and the results i've seen of that project is amazing. They've pulled usage away from the river and the vegetation restoration has made it a pleasant place to be. Could they do more? Yes. Could their camp practices be better? Yes. More modern toilet facilities like those at Sunrise or LYV would be a good start. But for the most part, I think the landscape around the river and the lake looks better to me than it did ten years ago. And honetly, I think the High Camp Employees are very good stewards of the place. I'm worried also about the over arching consequences of over restricted usage in the Yosemite Wilderness. It's a tough balancing act because you have to preserve wilderness, but if you tell people they can't use it, or if you make it too difficult to use it, then people don't go there, then they don't understand the value of it, and then they don't vote in favor of it, or donate money. I've worked for five years now in Rock Creek on the eastside, and longer than that in the tourist industry, and for a long time I struggled with the fact that in many ways I was facsilitating the overusage of a place I love. But I've come to realize that in certain places, people need to be able to experience nature. Especially city people and young people. Maybe there are some places that are better as quasi wilderness. I think Merced Lake HSC is one of those. It reasonably makes feasible a backcountry experience for many people who otherwise would not have the experience or ablity to enjoy the quiet solitude of the upper Merced. People want to experience that. Frankly, the Valley is disneyland. It's hard to appreciate Yosemite there. And you could remove Mered Lake HSC, and you'd still have Vogelsang and Sunrise. But there's something to be said for getting these people out on a multi day experience, moving through the vastness of Yosemite. I can't tell you how many people have met in the Yosemite backcountry who said they'd never done anything like it before and it was something they'd remember for the rest of their lives. I think its reasonable to say that Merced Lake HSC changes at least a 100 people's lives a summer. They are then more willing to support environmental protection and wilderness designation- things that are good for our society. I think we can manage to keep Merced Lake HSC, while still protecting water quality and the watershed while allowing for transcendant experiences for park visitors.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 19 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,05,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please provide for diversity in recreational opportunities by closing some of the sections of the river to paddling. Other visitors would appreciate to experience at least some sections of the Mercedes without paddling disturbances Thank You

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Correspondence ID: 20 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,05,2012 12:52:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I favor keeping Merced Lake and all the other high camps open. I also favor allowing the use of stock to continue as currently permitted: for maintenance of the trails and the high camps, for stocking the high camps, for use by the high camp clients who prefer to ride or are unable to hike, and for private stock parties. I worked many years in the Yosemite backcountry and strongly feel that proper, responsible use of stock is reasonable and not the environmental disaster it is frequently misrepresented as being.

Although I am glad the high camps are limited to their current sites, I feel they provide visitors who otherwise would not be able to visit the Yosemite wilderness the opportunity to visit and appreciate the park more completely.

From a historical standpoint, the elimination of stock and the high camps would be a loss to the park. Visitors unfamiliar with such activities would not be exposed to an aspect of backcountry experience enjoyed by many over the years, whether they had an inclination to go that route themselves or not.

The parks belong to all the people, not just elitists and those who think their way is the only way.

Correspondence ID: 21 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 7: Developing different camping areas for different uses(RV, car camping, walk-in tent sites, backpackers area) is a very good idea that can be implemented regardless of the specific number of camp sites or their placement in the park. 1. RV sites need larger parking areas, dumping station and hookups, so these sites can be dedicated as such with additional services. 2. Car camping needs a parking pad, tent space, fire pit and picnic table. 3. Walk-in sites have a separate parking lot and provide a more "genuine" tent camping experience. Each site is numbered, has tent space, fire pit and picnic table. 4. A backpackers area doesn't take reservations, has no parking, no picnic tables or fire pits, instead it is just an open area that fills as people arrive after their backpacking trip. Each user group gets the experience they are looking for with the smallest impact on the environment.

Topic Question 8: All five alternatives call for a unspecified reduction in the backpackers camp. This is surely to get the camping away from the river's edge which makes environmental sense. But as almost the entire camp is dedicated as restoration area in all the five alternatives, there will not be much for a backpackers camp. What is the plan proposed here?

Currently the rules in Yosemite state that if you are on backpacking trip you may stay the night before and / or after your trip at a backpackers camp, no reservations needed. I have stayed there many times. As backpackers arrive from their trips they settle in at the campground. First people take whatever sites are free, then as the evening wears on people squeeze wherever they can. It is always crowded. How is that going to work if the size is made much smaller?

Would it be possible to develop a new backpackers camp that is placed away from the river? This new backpackers camp can be just a tent area that doesn't take reservations, has no parking, no picnic tables, no fire pits, instead it just fills as people arrive after their backpacking trip.

Topic Question 9: On the previous iteration of planning I think I remember seeing several other proposed camp ground areas, including some west of Yosemite Lodge. Is there a reason none of those made it into these plans?

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 22 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,08,2012 14:34:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: ONLY Alternative Concept 5. See my comments at the bottom.

Topic Question 2: Far too Draconian a plan, and not worth considering in the slightest. The removal of entire lodging areas as well as bridges and roads is preposterous! Also does not adequately address the restoration of the large numbers of campsites

needed in the Valley that were lost in the flood.

Topic Question 3: Far too Draconian a plan, and not worth considering in the slightest. The removal of entire lodging areas as well as bridges and roads is preposterous! Also does not adequately address the restoration of the large numbers of campsites needed in the Valley that were lost in the flood.

Topic Question 4: Far too Draconian a plan, and not worth considering. The removal of entire lodging areas is unacceptable, and does not adequately address the restoration of the large numbers of campsites needed in the Valley that were lost in the flood.

Topic Question 5: Not worth consideration because it does not adequately address the restoration of the large numbers of campsites needed in the Valley that were lost in the flood.

Topic Question 6: The ONLY plan worth considering, because it DOES adequately address the restoration of the large numbers of campsites needed in the Valley that were lost in the flood. (See my comments below).

Topic Question 7: Alternative Concept 5 I endorse wholeheartedly!

Comments: All of the alternative concept plans presented more than adequately address and provide for the restoration and future preservation of the Merced River corridor. However, there is an urgent need for more campsites in Yosemite Valley. Upper and Lower River campgrounds need to be restored as completely as possible and practical to their pre-flood conditions. The only plan that is worthy in my opinion is Alternative Concept 5, which provides for the restoration of campsites in Upper and Lower River campgrounds that should never have been removed in the first place. The demand by the general public for camping opportunities in Yosemite Valley far exceeds the current woefully-small supply. Relocating these campsites outside Yosemite Valley is not an acceptable option! There is no sound reason why the restoration of the Valley campgrounds should be viewed as something contrary or detrimental to the restoration of the Merced River corridor, with proper planning and consideration (as outlined in Alternative concept 5), they are both objectives which can be satisfactorily achieved, and in harmony with each other. Because the restoration of pre-flood campsite numbers is so important and vital to the public, none of the other alternative concepts are worth considering in my opinion, because they do not adequately address the necessary increase in the numbers of campsites needed in Yosemite Valley. I strongly urge you to restore Upper & Lower River campgrounds, as well as the creation of new campgrounds and campsites as outlined in Alternative Concept 5, to ensure camping can continue to be enjoyed for generations to come, just as it has been for many years.

Correspondence ID: 23 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,08,2012 15:37:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: (see "Comments" below)

Topic Question 2: (see "Comments" below)

Topic Question 3: (see "Comments" below)

Topic Question 4: (see "Comments" below)

Topic Question 5: (see "Comments" below)

Topic Question 6: (see "Comments" below)

Topic Question 7: (see "Comments" below)

Topic Question 8: (see "Comments" below)

Topic Question 9: Reservations system for park entry.

Comments: Perhaps this was addressed - based upon an initial skim of the contents, I'm wondering if the reservations-system idea has been rejected, and if so, why. It would seem to be essential as a way to address the potential crowding issues of alternatives 4 and 5, at least.

Correspondence ID: 24 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,09,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Park Service Staff,

Please consider opening the entirety of the Wild and Scenic Merced River to whitewater enthusiasts.

Paddling is a non-destructive, low-impact activity that is consistent with hiking, backpacking, and climbing in the connection with the great outdoors. Whitewater is enjoyed and well-protected through permitting and careful access regulation in other National Parks. Currently, a large section of quality whitewater and beautiful wilderness is off-limits to paddlers. It is time Yosemite catches up.

With much respect,

Correspondence ID: 25 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,09,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am writing about your Wild and Scenic Planning process in Yosemite National Park. As a long time kayaker and rafter (and former climber who climbed there in the 70's and 80's) now in my 60's, I totally support allowing paddling on the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River. Compared to hiking, horseback riding or mountain biking, paddling is much less lower impact. Rivers are an incredible resource that people who are able should be permitted to enjoy directly by floating down them. Resource values can be protected by managing high use stretches of the river through a permitting system. By permitting only private boaters and not commercial, you will lessen any potential impact too. I am against any commercial use. I hope someday, before I am too old, I will be able to boat these stretches of river thanks to your enlightened decisions.

Correspondence ID: 26 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,09,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hi, I would like to ask you to support paddling on the Merced River in Yosemite. Paddling is a low impact, beautiful and special way to experience a place. I would love to have the opportunity to experience Yosemite this way. Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 27 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,10,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Admittably, it's not an easy read but the diagrams are well-done and I appreciate the thoughtfulness that has gone into it.

Topic Question 2: My main concern with this plan is what will happen to Merced Lake High Sierra camp? It's unclear.... The camp is almost 100 years old and has historical buildings (the barn) and is absolutely essential to the high sierra camp loop. Because it is the furthest camp out, reducing the capacity would hurt all of the high camps. Traditionally, this is the camp where guests have an extra day to recover from the rigorous hike. For historical reasons and traditional reasons (much like Badger pass), this camp should stay. Any resources put into restoring this camp would be better invested in green upgrades, IE solar technology and composter toilets.

Topic Question 3: Please see above. The high sierra camps are a rare historical tradition of generations of wilderness-lovers and Merced Lake is the oldest and most historically significant of the camps.

Topic Question 4: Many people who make it that far out in the wilderness would not be able to do so without the benefit of the high sierra camp to break up the long journey. Older guests are able to enjoy this area as well beacuse of the ability to not have to carry a tent, cooking gear, food, and camping gear. Closing this camp would make this area off limits to many people.

Topic Question 5: If only the backpackers camp is retained at Merced Lake High Sierra camp, then we are essentially excluding thousands of people from enjoying an area that has both historical significance and a tradition of appreciation. Funds would be better spent in making the high sierra camps greener and more more efficient.

Topic Question 6: See above

Topic Question 7: I would prefer an alternative in which the high sierra camps (ALL OF THEM) stay in tact. They are unique and historically and culturally significant! I believe our children should get to enjoy them as some of us, our parents, and grandparents have. I am all for restoration and believe the high camps could be improved with a little investing in sustainable bathrooms, solar power, green technology, etc.

Topic Question 8: See above

Topic Question 9: See above

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 28 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,10,2012 15:37:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am commenting on your plan because i feel it is crucial for the planning committee to consider the positive impact the high sierra camps have on not only the people who back pack through the back country of Yosemite National Park, but also for the people who are lucky enough to work there all summer long and call it their home. i was one of the lucky ones who was blessed to call Merced Lake High Sierra camp my home for two summers. i learned such a great deal about the wilderness and its wonders, the animals and vegetation of the high sierra, the mountain ranges and the paths to be traveled, a low impact way of life while traveling throughout the sierras, a community sense of mind, the tranquility of life without media distraction and so much more. this period of my life changed me in such a positive way! i would strongly warn against the removal of this historic and impressionistic camp! it has throughout (so many) years given the youth a better understanding of self worth, independence, knowledge of wisdom lost outside the wood, community and family, and most importantly the first hand never to be forgotten love of the wilderness and the lifelong moral standard of wilderness preservation and care. if this camp were to no longer stand, i fear so greatly that the surrounding area of the high sierra would go unseen by so many, and would therefore not be allowed the opportunity to teach so many the importance of natures morals nearly lost in our busy and artificial world. SAVE THE HIGH CAMPS! help them to be lower impact on the ecology and environment if necessary, but please do not take away the classroom, the playground, and the historic preservation of such a unique and priceless place, where i call my home (as well as so many others), Merced Lake!

Correspondence ID: 29 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,10,2012 17:15:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I believe that they do address, not solve, the different issues - in Yosemite Valley,not the high camps(merced lake).

I'll also admit that I am more concerned with the effects of the stables and Merced Lake HSC - much of the proposed restoration along riverbanks and floodplains is necessary. The valley issues are different than the rest of the park. So please keep in mind that I am mostly addressing the effects on Merced Lake and the stables.

Topic Question 2: I disagree with this alternative- Elimination of the stables erases one of the unique connections to Yosemite's rich past. The stables not only allows a unique experience in viewing and understanding, but it also supplies Merced Lake high sierra camp with vital supplies to maintain a working production. This alternative oversteps the line. You have an innovative and intelligent public living in the park from multiple backgrounds that could turn resourceful in finding a solution to impact. Outright elimination is too drastic. It would cut too many important functions off.

Topic Question 3: same as below concerning merced lake and stables

Topic Question 4: You are will be denying a large portion of the general public from accessing some of the richest regions of the park. Eliminating Merced Lake HSC eliminates a vast education process. As the assistant manager for 4 years at Merced Lake I am in charge of announcements after dinner where I relate a plethora of topics to the public. Such topics include low-impact traveling, flora, fauna, internal programs like recycling and the use of natural products, points of interest in the back country, and many more. My hopes are that they will take the info back to the places they came from. I also run the front office (another crucial point of reference for many of the travels coming through the camp) where I educate people a second time reinforcing such ideals.

this goes for alternative 2

Topic Question 5: This concept is one that I can support. I had the good fortune to be working for the rafts for a week before the High Camps opened last year. On one of the days we pulled out of the raft exit parking lot into traffic where we sat for an hour. People lined up with us mentioned that the cars go all the way back to the 41 -140 merge! So I support moving many of the day visitor's cars back to el portal. Most day visitors are staying on the path around the main shuttle stops anyway, so there is no use for personal cars.

Topic Question 6: I also agree with this alternative-

Topic Question 7: 4 and 5 - eliminating some of the temporary housing areas that are eyesores! Also, they direct people in a way for optimal valley experience.

Topic Question 8: 1,2,3- the impact of the stables and Merced Lake HSC on the environment is minute in comparison to the impact that visitors have on the rest of the valley! We need to continue to educate people instead of restricting them.

Topic Question 9: I would consider parking lots outside all the gates for day use visitors and greatly expand the public

transportation sector.

Comments: Please keep in mind what I have mentioned about the education that visitors receive from me and fellow employees concerning the significance of the Park. We are able to touch people in a very personal way not seen in other areas of the park. I can speak for many other employees in saying that you won't find better stewards of the national parks anywhere else. And when we do pass on to other pursuits we take the knowledge learned to the new areas, incorporating healthy traditions, and bringing family and friends back to a simpler way of life. We can lower our impact- it happens every season at Merced Lake HSC with or without a plan.

please feel free to contact me [redacted] - I have over 4 years experience working in yosemite, including 5 summers at Merced Lake HSC and two summers at Glen Aulin.

Correspondence ID: 30 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,10,2012 18:23:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I apologize for not answering the questions. I am just offering up my viewpoint as it is, with no influences or criteria. My name is [redacted]. I was employed at Merced Lake H.S.C. for 3 years and Tuolumne for 2 (among other stuff). In 2006 I happened to fall from Mt. Hoffman 120 ft. and ended up getting a traumatic brain injury, being in a coma for a while and halting my love for the backcountry of Yosemite. What i really want to focus on is the idea to augment/remove the existing Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. I guess, really, what I want to focus on is why Merced Lake is good the way it is. Merced Lake is the furthest high sierra camp from any road. It is at a relatively low elevation and provides a good point for further exploration, of both the Lyell/Mcclure massif and the Clark range. It is a welcome respite for those who are doing the full High Sierra Camp loop, providing a less alpine, more canyon/lake environment. It seems to be a remote outpost in a beautiful, off the beaten track wilderness and provides access without too much impact on pristine wilderness. To have this somewhat isolated outpost be the furthest camp from any road in Yosemite National Park, be supplied goods by pack-trains to be able to get awesome food cooked for you, to be able to rest your tired body on a downy soft bed and then go explore up canyon, the Clark range, etc., to be able to go swim in the merced river and then go hike up to Vogelsang to enjoy more splendor. That is amazing, and there are vastly more amazing things you can do with Merced Lake as a key component. My love for Yosemite, my love for the most vital, important part of that (to me), Merced Lake is not something that can be able to handle removal/alteration/augmentation. It is a vital building block that continues to grow with each layer of history and value placed apon it. It's getting to the point where it is a holy, sacred place. Thankyou.

Correspondence ID: 31 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,10,2012 18:47:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Please don't eliminate Merced Lake High Sierra Camp!

Topic Question 3: Please don't eliminate Merced Lake High Sierra Camp!

Topic Question 6: Is it ecologically feasible to increase the number of visitors to the park each year?

Topic Question 7: Alternative 4

Comments: I worked in the high sierra camps for 6 spectacular summers. In that time, I forged a connection with Yosemite's backcountry that persists to this day. I've also witnessed this same connection in all those who have been fortunate enough to work in such a special place as Merced Lake, May Lake, Sunrise, Glen Aulin, Vogelsang or Tuolumne Meadows. I've also witnessed the way in which visitors to the high camps return year after year, themselves wonderful stewards of these amazing places. All of this makes me very anxious about any alternative that calls for the removal and restoration of Merced Lake or any other high camp.

Any plan for the Merced River needs to balance the need for restoration and protection of this sacred place and its ecosystems with the need to foster the next generation of thoughtful and conscientious park protectors. I'm not sure the droves of Yosemite Valley day-trippers will live up to that moniker. In my opinion, the best way to do this is not to limit access to the backcountry; instead, it's important to educate visitors on how best to enjoy it. The High Sierra Camps are a great way to educate and inspire and should not be eliminated.

Correspondence ID: 32 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,11,2012 15:16:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: My concern is directly related to Segment 1 of the plan. There seems to be many options to help to situation and keep the river wild. I do not think closing Merced Lake High Sierra Camp should be considered. The High Sierra Camps are an institution in Yosemite National Park. The High Sierra Camps encourage people who normally cannot or wouldn't experience these beautiful areas of the park, to get out there and see the beauty. The camps are historic and should remain. The number of permits for the backpackers and also the number of occupants could possibly be lowered? The type of person who visits and recreates in the High Sierra, is usually the same person who respects their surroundings to keep the beauty untouched. I worked

in the high camps and these were some of the best years of my life. The impression the high sierras and the camps leave on a person is irreplaceable. So many people have been to the camps and have had amazing experiences of their own. Please leave the camps alone!

Correspondence ID: 33 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,11,2012 18:43:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See Below.

Topic Question 2: See Below.

Topic Question 3: See Below.

Topic Question 4: See Below.

Topic Question 5: See Below.

Topic Question 6: See Below.

Topic Question 7: See Below.

Topic Question 8: See Below.

Topic Question 9: See Below.

Comments: Response to the Merced River Plan [redacted]

Background: I have been visiting Yosemite since the mid-1950's when I first visited Tuolumne Meadows and spent time scrambling up Lembert Dome, hiking to Elizabeth Lake and visiting Vogelsang. Over the following 50 plus years I have returned first to hike and climb in the Valley and throughout the Park, then with my kids to backpack and now I spend time with my two year old grandchildren, who love changing the hydrology of the Merced River in their own small way by throwing rocks into the river. I have also spent four seasons as a month long volunteer; two in the Valley and two in Wawona. I am also active on two non-profit boards whose activities are centered in Yosemite.

Summary: My overall perspective is that the NPS should be developing an overall comprehensive plan for managing Yosemite that actively balances the twin needs to preserve and protect the Park and to provide an environment where all the resources (the Merced River as well as rocks, scenery, geology, falls, trails, meadows, flowers, forests, mountains, cliffs, and wildlife) are available for enjoyment by their owners: the people of the U.S. What is needed is a comprehensive plan that incorporates elements of these alternatives with an overall plan for Yosemite Valley and Wawona that is not constrained by the artificial boundaries imposed by the WSRA and Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne decision.

The Merced River Plan is just a small part of what an overall management plan. Even taking into consideration the limitations of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA), which didn't contemplate a river as complex and geographically constrained as the Merced, and the strictures of the Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne decision, many of the Merced River Plan alternatives are seriously flawed. My objections are laid out below. If forced to select one of the alternatives; or a blend of two or more of the alternatives, I would select alternative 4 while trying to incorporate two of the restoration options in alternatives 1 and 2: restoration of Stoneman meadow by re-routing of Northside drive; and restoration of Ahwahnee meadow by eliminating the portion of Northside drive through the meadow (see discussion below). In addition the preferred alternative should incorporate one or more of the pedestrian undercrossing/roundabout alternatives where appropriate.

General views: 1. The Merced River Plan represents a narrow interpretation of available planning options that attempts to maintain compliance with WSRA and FOY v. Kempthorne. However it is deficient both in what it includes and what it excludes: a. It does not deal with non-visitor facilities outside of the Merced River corridor as defined by the WSRA or the Merced River 100 year flood plain, e.g. Courthouse, jail, medical/dental facility, Yosemite school, Main Post Office, Ranger Club, Park HQ, Yosemite District HQ. It is interesting that the Wawona Golf course, which for the most part is outside both the 100 year flood plain and the WSRA corridor is slated for removal in Alternatives 1 and 2. This is, I suppose, a nod to the Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne footnote 5. b. It does not call out concession facilities not mentioned in Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne: beauty salon, barber shop, pet kennel, or the Ansel Adams Gallery. c. It is silent on several of the facilities called out in Footnote 5 of the Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne: namely the Wawona, Ahwahnee and Curry pools, the amphitheatre (presumably the one at Camp Curry, but it could also be the newer amphitheatre in the old Lower River campground), the art activity center, and the Wawona tennis court. d. It does not take into consideration the loss of 400 plus visitor beds or 350 campsites due to rock falls and the 1997 flood that in 15 years has already reduced overnight room/site capacity by 33%. In its most limiting alternative (Alternative 1), this plan calls for further decreases of up to an additional 600 beds, making for an overall reduction of 62% of the beds and 44% in campsites that were available in 1997. This is not acceptable. The current reduction in beds may be partly responsible for the increase in congestion today since the ratio of day

vs. overnight visitation has switched from 60% overnight to 40% overnight in the past 20 years per one of the slides shown in the workshop. Overnight visitors tend NOT to use their vehicles once they have parked in their campsite or lodging unit. Vehicle use studies can confirm this. e. It does not discuss or project the impact of any alternative on NPS and contractor employee (e.g. AT&T, AA Gallery and other) headcount and housing. This is especially egregious in alternatives 1 and 2 where a 30% reduction in visitation is envisioned; yet there is no projection of a reduction in NPS/contractor personnel and their resulting housing and office/facilities requirements. f. There is no discussion of the impact of any alternative on the quality and type of visitor experience. It's almost as if the visitor is not a factor. The visitor is a statistic to be managed. Since it appears that using market pricing is not a feasible rationing tool to the NPS (except some references to using congestion pricing in some alternatives), simply eliminating facilities and/or access will not reduce demand. Visitors will figure out how to manage visits or ways around lotteries, auctions, or whatever mechanisms the NPS puts into place to try and manage visitation. The net result will be an unhappy constituency. The potential long term consequence is that Yosemite loses its attraction as a place to visit; which is a purposeful outcome desired by some. The impact in the gateway communities will be economic decline; perhaps significant if private capital does not replace the removed park infrastructure (office infrastructure, lodging, restaurants, activities) that could feasibly be located outside the park near the park boundaries at Hodgdon Meadows, the South Entrance, and Foresta or even inside the Park at Crane Flat, Yosemite West or Aspen Valley. However, since none of the alternatives discusses potential replacement infrastructure outside the WSRA corridor the plan remains deficient in this respect. Even if private capital replaces some of the removed park visitation infrastructure the limitations placed on day visitation will ultimately lead to Yosemite's decline as the crown jewel of the National Park System. Perhaps that is the desired outcome for many but it is contrary to the intent of the WSRA, the organic act which created the NPS in 1916; and perhaps more relevant, Secretary of the Interior Lane's 1918 letter to Director Stephen Mather. This letter clearly outlines the priorities of the NPS, to wit: i. Every opportunity should be afforded the public, wherever possible to enjoy the national parks in the manner that best satisfies the individual taste. Automobiles and motorcycles will be permitted in all of the national parks; in fact, the parks will be kept accessible by any means practicable. All outdoor sports which may be maintained consistently with the observation of the safeguards thrown around the national parks by law will be heartily endorsed and aided wherever possible. Mountain climbing, horseback riding, walking, motoring, swimming, boating, and fishing will ever be the favorite sports. Winter sports will be developed in the parks that are accessible throughout the year. Hunting will not be permitted in any national park. And

ii. Low-priced camps operated by concessioners should be maintained, aswell as comfortable and even luxurious hotels wherever the volume of travel warrants the establishment of these classes of accommodations. In each reservation, as funds are available, a system of free camp sites willbe cleared, and these grounds will be equipped with adequate water and sanitation facilities. g. It does not address facilities in the Wawona area except for concessionaire stables, the camp ground, and a picnic area. No mention of the pool or tennis courts at the Wawona Hotel or the Pioneer History Center, which are inside the WSRA corridor. However the Wawona Golf Course which is mentioned in Footnote 5 of Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne is slated for removal in Alternative 1. This is does not make sense. h. It does not explore opportunities for economies of scale: for example combining the concessionaire and NPS stables at all three locations (Valley, Wawona, and Tuolumne Meadows) instead of eliminating the concessionaire facility only. Under the first two alternatives with significantly reduced visitation, presumably the demand on the NPS stables would be reduced allowing for some combination, with limited/reduced usage. Same comment for NPS and concessionaire office space. Why not combine both either in El Portal, Mariposa or, if they remain in the Valley, inside the Park Administrative area?

2. Discussion of Alternatives a. Common to all alternatives; 1. Unacceptable: i. Removal of Yosemite Lodge Pool and Snack Stand. As mentioned in one of the presentations, the pools probably keep visitors away from the rivers hence reducing potential degradation. It is curious that the Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne footnote 5 uses the plural of pool in their examples of services and facilities that demonstrate the level of degradation in the river corridor. Only the Lodge pool is discussed in the plan. Why is the Plan silent on the Ahwahnee, Curry and Wawona pools? ii. Removal of the NPS volunteer office. It could be relocated but retained in the Valley where the bulk of the NPS and Yosemite Conservancy volunteers are located. iii. Removal of the Happy Isle snack stand. This seeming innocuous kiosk was specifically called out in Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne, and is used as one of the picture postcards of river degradation. I have personally observed hundreds of tired families refresh themselves and their children at the stand (during my volunteer summers). While in itself not an ORV, this small kiosk stand (less than 200 square feet) makes it possible for more visitors to enjoy the ORV's of Vernal and Nevada Falls and the unique staircase geologic formation which created them. iv. Relocation of the concessionaire HQ to EP. The concessionaire HQ and the NPS Park HQ should be co-located to facilitate communication between the two most important organizations in charge of creating visitor experiences. Ideally they should remain in the valley, but perhaps more removed from the river corridor. Both could also be could be located in El Portal or even in Mariposa. v. "Relocation" of bicycle and raft rental concessions. I am not sure what relocation means here. If the rental concessions are not located close to their point of usage they are virtually useless. vi. Repurposing of Village sports shop, convenience shop, nature shop. It's not clear what is intended by "repurposing". Visitors are the best judge of whether a facility meets a purpose, not planners. Let visitors decide?if it fills a need, it has a purpose. vii. Reduction in Yosemite Valley Backpackers camp. Why? viii. Non-inclusion of the restoration of El Cap Meadow. This important project is called out in alternatives 4, and 5; but for some reason is not included in alternatives 1, 2 and 3. It has little impact on any other project and is certainly an important restoration project that could proceed independently in all 5 alternatives. ix. Silence on the disposition of the Curry Village Ice Rink. This seems strange since it is specifically called out in Footnote 5 in Friends of Yosemite v Kempthorne. If I had to decide between eliminating this concession and the bike and rafting concessions, I would vote to retain the bike and rafting concessions. This is based on my assumption that far more visitors use the biking and rafting concessions. My preference however would be to retain all three since they do not overlap in their seasonal usage and share the same footprint at Curry Village. 2. Acceptable i. Removal/relocation of facilities within 150 feet of MR high water mark. This makes a lot of sense; and will help restore the health of the river corridor. ii. Restorations in the El Portal area and development of Abbieville and the Trailer Park. Additional employee housing could also be developed in Rancheria; and Old El Portal. iii. Although not specifically mentioned in the plan document or in any of the alternatives' discussion, the presentations offered two very innovative solutions for managing traffic congestion: roundabouts at the camp 6 to Yosemite Village and the Bank intersections as well as a pedestrian tunnel from the Yosemite Falls visitor area to Yosemite Lodge. Implementation of any or all of these ideas should help boost traffic capacity and help minimize congestion in any of the alternatives, but most significantly in alternatives 4 and 5. iv. One of the more controversial ideas in alternatives 1 and 2 is to eliminate the road from Curry to the Village which runs through Ahwahnee Meadow. This is an acceptable idea especially if

you can get creative with alternative traffic flows, which could be confirmed with study/simulation. Some ideas would be : 1. To route the road over the Ahwahnee Bridge (meaning you don't remove it) and connect the road with the existing road east of Church Bowl. 2. To completely change the routing of Northside Drive (to inbound) and Southside drive to outbound. This would change the dynamics of egress eliminating the need to travel through the heavy Village/Lodge corridor. Instead day visitors would exit directly into less developed areas with much less pedestrian conflict. 3. Another idea would be to reroute all of the traffic from the east end of the valley over Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee Bridges then south of the Ahwahnee Hotel to connect with the current Ahwahnee access road just west of the Ahwahnee Entrance at Church Bowl. That would eliminate the need for the road through both Stoneman and Ahwahnee meadows as well as provide more direct Village access to campers, who presumably have more need of the Village Store. It would also diminish the need to remove housing/visitor beds in the Boystown area. Continue the road through the Village north of the store and have it join current Northside drive at Cook's Meadow. One disadvantage to this approach is that the view from the road would be much less scenic. This traffic alternative avoids the meadows; and travels under canopy and through built up areas.

b. Alternative 1: This alternative is not acceptable as it constrains the visitor experience substantially by reducing overall visitation by 30%. It eliminates facilities that provide important visitor infrastructure such as the Yosemite Lodge and Housekeeping Camp. It eliminates = of the current number of visitor beds and the same number of concessionaire beds with no mention of NPS/contractor beds eliminated. The significant increase in staffing and infrastructure required at entrance stations to manage permits and reservations is not addressed. Elimination of Merced Lake HSC destroys the High Sierra Loop concept unless a trail can be constructed south of the Cathedral range through true wilderness via Nelson and Matthes Lakes to directly connect Vogelsang and Sunrise HSC's. Although eliminating the bike and rafting concessions does help the alternative conform to Friends of Yosemite v. Kempthorne, both activities are recreational ORV's. Eliminating the concession means that many fewer visitors will be able to enjoy them and ORV's of the Merced River. c. Alternative 2. Unacceptable for similar reasons as above. Fewer facilities are reduced or eliminated. Overall visitation is maintained at the levels of Alternative 1, with some increase in overnight visitor use. d. Alternative 3. Marginally acceptable. Manages usage to basically equivalent levels as today with a 15% decrease in planned peak usage through a parking pricing scheme (not described in detail). Significantly increases camping sites which is acceptable. Conversion of Merced Lake HSC to a "temporary" backpacker camp is not acceptable. Maintains some Housekeeping Camp units, but an overall reduction of 200 units from the current level is unacceptable. We need to keep in mind that Housekeeping Camp is the perfect compromise for visitors that are not prepared to "camp" but cannot afford the cost of hotel/motel and the associated meal costs. (See above quotes from the letter from Secretary Lane to Stephen Mather in 1918) e. Alternative 4. Acceptable. Manages visitation to levels slightly above today's levels. Begins to take proactive measures to address capacity issues with ideas such as the West end Parking. Implementing the innovative traffic management ideas within this alternative should provide significant reductions in congestion. Gets creative with new camping ideas (reestablishing Rivers campground, expansion of Camp 4, etc). If you combined the concession and NPS stables in the current NPS site, you could expand camping at the current concession stable site per alternative 3. f. Alternative 5. Also acceptable; but perhaps not necessary at this time. The projected expansions of the Lodge and campgrounds could be held in reserve for the future should visitation continue to expand.

Correspondence ID: 34 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,12,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear planning team, I have read through the Alternative Concepts Workbook. I think it is wonderful that Yosemite is putting so much thought into the Merced River watershed. It surely is a treasure. I fully support creating a wild and scenic river and being deliberate in managing development and use in the watershed. Having said that I am stunned, frankly, that the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp may be closed. I'm not going to comment on the alternatives individually or in detail other than this. I really do fully support the general idea. However as a career interpreter with the National Park Service (I'm now at Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Alaska) I spent four summers from 1996-1999 guiding High Sierra Loop Trips as an NPS interpretive ranger. I can tell you, of all the interpretation I have ever done (North Cascades, Yosemite, Arches, Zion, Wrangell-St. Elias, & Lake Clark) the visitors to the High Sierra Camps of Yosemite were making the deepest connections and having the most profound experiences. For many these were not merely recreational trips. They often started out that way but by the time they were done, the historic significance of the camps, the trail, the belittling grandure of Yosemite had taken their toll on an atrophied spirit creating in people a shift in the soul. These are places where real park stewards are created, where people begin to care deep in their hearts, where National Parks become central to the core of who people are. You can not close Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. To close the camp would be a tragedy for the future. The camp is central to these profound experiences, an anchor of the system both for the loop and the hike from Tuolumne to the Valley floor. It was commissioned by Stephen Mather and has been part of the development of park stewards for the history of the National Park Service. Deep experiences in nature are critical offerings of Yosemite National Park and the Merced River. People need these places to exist. The High Sierra Camps are unique in the national parks not only for their history but also for the experience they offer, not one of a car windshield and a fancy lodge but also not one requiring the strength of the young. I had a 90 year old man on one of my trips who hiked the whole thing. He never could have carried a pack but in the High Sierra Camps he could be out camping and reveling in the natural world in a way you can't do on a day hike. He was grateful. I can only hope that when I am done carrying my pack that there will sill be places where I can lay my head in a tent and hear the night world around me. I hope that the High Sierra Camps are some of those places. I hope you can find a way to care for the Merced River while continuing to operate the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. After working for the National Park Service for 18 years there are few things anymore that I don't think can be changed for the better by making some changes. But closing Merced Lake High Sierra Camp I don't think will see the light of history well. It is too important to too many lifetime seminal experiences in Yosemite and our nation's national parks. I really believe Yosmite and the nation will be poorer if we lose it. Please don't close Merced Lake. Respectfully,

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Correspondence ID: 35 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,12,2012 17:59:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: There are many interpretations to the balance between resource protection and public use; however, NPS has

made a good faith effort to achieve the stated goals. All Concepts involve some degree of river restoration. However, having experienced a typical peak demand day during peak river flows last June, it is difficult to understand how any Concept that allows for increased vehicular traffic within the valley, such as Concepts 4 and 5, would not adversely impact the ORVs.

Topic Question 2: Complete removal of the Yosemite Lodge is not a necessary part of this Concept and may not reduce overall vehicular traffic (a fundamental goal of this Concept) when those who would have stayed at the lodge now travel to and from the valley. Furthermore, there should be some category of lodging between Curry tent cabin and the Ahwahnee for those that are not going to camp. Reduction in number of lodging units, such as that proposed in Concept 2, is appropriate.

Topic Question 3: Concept 2 is a good balance between overnight lodging and camping, and day use to maximize visitor experience by limiting day use. Adding 40 RV sites where all RVs are sited together is appropriate, as the separation of RVs and tent campers is important for visitor experience. The reduced number of vehicles and permit for parking is attractive. In my experience, the number of cars allowed within the valley has always been a major factor in the visitor experience. Overall, this is a reasonable Concept.

Topic Question 4: Added camping within the valley is a positive aspect of this Concept. Concept could be improved by reducing number of day use vehicles through parking at both El Portal and West Valley, as the total number of cars within the valley have a disproportionate impact compared to number of visitors. Adding campers would not markedly increase traffic if methods/incentives to encourage lodgers/campers to park their cars after they arrive were implemented (e.g., one time, variable fee or limited use parking permit).

Topic Question 5: The increased vehicular traffic over existing conditions is likely to have a negative impact on visitor experience despite any proposed improvements in parking and traffic flow. Since day users account for more than 60% of the valley traffic, any proposed increase in day visitor use, beyond current levels, would have minimal impact if parking at El Portal and/or West Valley is employed rather than by adding car traffic and parking within the valley.

Topic Question 6: See comments for Concept 4. With the marked increase in car traffic and total number of visitors over existing conditions, this Concept is unlikely to meet the goals of the Merced River Plan.

Topic Question 7: Both Concepts 2 and 3 are reasonable alternatives with suggested modifications as discussed above in Questions 3 and 4.

Topic Question 8: Complete removal of Yosemite Lodge, as discussed above under Question 2 (for Concept 1).

Topic Question 9: No comment.

Comments: While the various Concepts focus on total number of visitors per day, the total number of cars within the valley is a primary indicator of overall quality of experience (in terms of visual impact, noise and pollution). Adding or subtracting number of cars within the valley does not have the same impact as number of visitors. For all Concepts under consideration, additional day visitors could be accommodated with offsite parking as proposed at El Portal and/or West Valley, not by adding more parking within the valley. Consider:

? Integration of YARTS and Valley transportation system, especially for parking at El Portal.

? Parking permits limited by reservation during peak use should be applied to all Concepts. If the public was informed that parking permits were limited and they needed to plan ahead to obtain one, they would be more inclined to seek other forms of transportation, such as YARTS. ? Capacity can be improved by roundabouts and pedestrian underpasses, as proposed, and both should be carried out no matter which Concept is selected.

Correspondence ID: 36 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,12,2012 18:00:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am very concerned about how this plan will affect the High Sierra Camps in Yosemite. They are a very important way for people to experience the High Country who may not be able to carry everything with them everywhere they go. The High Camps allow people to experience the wonder of the High Country and some of us actually get to live in the High Country to help these people learn to walk softly on the land. Please do not close those camps! They are a part of history and a way for future generations to fall in love with both Yosemite and nature.

Correspondence ID: 37 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: DNC-Yosemite Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,14,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: All alternatives with the exception of Alternative 5 plan for the continued reduction of parking, facilities, campgrounds, and overnight accommodations. Since the 1980 GMP was inroduced, overnight accommodations, campsights, and parking has been systematically removed. If Alternatives 1-4 are implemented from this Plan, it will be contrary to the Goals of the MRP by restricting access for public recreation.

Topic Question 2: The significant reduction of facilites and services in this plan would be contrary to the Mission of NPS in Providing Access to Visitors and would have a devastating impact on the gateway communities outside of Yosemite.

Topic Question 6: Alternative 5 is the only Plan that restores the valley to allow for the required visitation levels. Since the 1980 GMP, overnight accommodations have already been reduced by 780 hotel and campsite units. The reduction of parking in the Valley has created gridlock on at least 68 days a year during peak season.

Topic Question 7: Reducing services and facilites in Yosemite is contrary to the original intended use of the park by visitors. Restricting access through the elimination of facilities will destroy the demand for this destination and the local economies of the surrounding communities.

Topic Question 9: Alternative 6 should be to continue with current recreation and facilites mix and "do nothing" to reduce the current access for visitors.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 38 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite Conservancy Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,14,2012 17:14:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Do not close the Merced High Country Camp. Many people learn about more the Park and how to respect it through these camps,as opposed to those who only spend time in the Valley. If this is closed, these visitors would not get to know what the wilderness offers. The National Parks were set aside for public enjoyment. Please do not take this away. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 39 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,15,2012 14:41:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: please no major changes,impove the vally dont change it for the worst, keep all employee housing and area alone.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 40 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Crystal River Realty Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 15:04:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes. We need a vision that enriches and nurtures the beauty and vitality of the area. I have not read all the alternative plans yet, but I will and complete this again at a later date.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 41 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: boy scouts Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 15:05:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Don't limit day access to the Valley even though it gets impacted in the summer. After all, people come from all over the world to see the valley. Have more shuttles and more mandatory parking outside the park to help accomodate.

Second, change the policy limiting the back country trips to 8 people. We scouts need 4 adults for safety reasons which only leaves us 4 scouts to backpack. That's not fair where regular trips involve just adults who then can take 8 adults. You are doing the scouts a disservice.

Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 42 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Riozen Media Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 16:01:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Conservation first is what John Muir wanted and I agree!

Correspondence ID: 43 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: you need to show what these areas look like today and how these changes will affect the future look of the park. why, government reports spend time with endless verbal explanations without any real before and after photo shots is beyond me. how can anyone really know the impacts until they have a visual picture of the changes. it's ignores honest explanation. we have photo shop to show future concepts use todays tools to show what each plan will be it's much more meaningful.

Topic Question 2: see above

Topic Question 3: see above

Topic Question 4: see above

Topic Question 5: see above

Topic Question 6: see above

Topic Question 7: preserve as much of the natural look as possible, planting trees adding rocks is possible provided it aids fish and wild life migrations.

Topic Question 8: more traffic will need to be addressed to project though's impacts to the park over a years time. adding in the public as volunteers are part of the healing process to any potential impacts from these changes.

Topic Question 9: see above

Comments: if you address my concerns then you will be on a path to a more balanced and lasting arrangement for this parks future.

Correspondence ID: 44 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: save this Merced River and Yosemite keep the natural look and save water also

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 45 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 19:00:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: yes, but we need to focus thoughts for the use by the public equal to the river's health.

Topic Question 2: no good - doesn't serve the public for recreation

Topic Question 3: no good - doesn't serve the public for recreation

Topic Question 4: no good - doesn't serve the public for recreation

Topic Question 5: better - but not there yet

Topic Question 6: best option - we need need need the restoration of the campsites we lost in the flood - the way for families to enjoy this treasure is to stay in the park for days and commune with its beauty. the commercial vessels in the span of the river being used by them now is a perfect option for that segment of the public that wants to just paddle for a day for enjoyment. keep the option for private and commercial river use and increase the campsites please.....

Topic Question 7: concept 5 is the best

Topic Question 8: new concerns with the removal of the two bridges - is that absolutely necessary - would it make a huge difference in the health of the merced??? i think not.

Topic Question 9: no

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 46 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 19:13:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 7: I prefer Altetrnative 4 and 5. While the wilderness experience is less "pure," I believe that it is better to share this treasure with as many poeple as can be reasonably accommidated. I like the controls on traffic, limiting auto use, and emphasizing the excellent public transit. I say this as a 40 year Sierra Club member.

As a detail, I would like the public transit to be better publicized, as many visitors seem unaware that the public transit option could improve their visit.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 47 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: River Lover, Fisherman, Hiker, Camper, Photographer, Outdoorsman Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 20:07:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The lower the concept number the better the goals are met. Lots of people ruin wild rivers, they just can't help it. In fifty years, I don't want this to be in the same shape as the Russian river is now.

Topic Question 2: This is my favorite. I have a few suggestions:

Don't tear out the bridges. Concept 1 still has a lot of people and people like to look at rivers. Bridges afford people the opportunity to easily view much of the river from a vantage point of a bird. The bridges alone will satisfy many people's look-see gene and many will not feel they need to tramp up to and along the bank causing harm to flora and fauna. The goal is to protect the river, not make it look like man never existed. Make the bridges look rustic or pretend that Indians made the bridges. The river's ecosystem is primary. A stationary bridge doesn't cause much harm.

One big concern I have for the river is the New Zealand Mud snail infestation. So as keeper of a wild river, I would make waders and hip boots illegal. Wading barefoot OK. Wading with tennis shoes OK *after* tennis shoes have been steamed or disinfected by the NPS. There is only one Yosemite with the Merced river. They are one of our most stunningly beautiful outdoor places. Lets not degrade it more.

I don't know if NPS already does this; NPS could raffle off the sites and visiting hours/days like the State of Calif. does for rustic waterfowl hunting areas.

Topic Question 7: Concept 1

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 48 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, explained in the intro to the plans--A bity hard to follow but very interesting for Yosemite lovers.

Topic Question 2: Not all citizen tax paying visitors are young and fit and able to be self reliant and the goal of National Park is to provide services to people of all ages and fitness, not just the rock climers and back packers. Also a place for people who work a job and maybe can come for only one to three days! Alternative one is an elite group of people and not for the average USA citizen I am familar with--they have the "back country Wilderness to go to if they can afford it. Will cost a lot of money in suits against it, I would bet. Many Americans do love their National Parks but what good are they if you can't get in to them. We own it--not private citizens.

Topic Question 3: ditto above

Topic Question 4: OK--better balance for the tax-payers who want to come. Plus more camp sites means the user fees goes to up keep of the NPS and not to some private concession.

Topic Question 5: Not as much saving of the river so my second choice

Topic Question 6: Doesn't protect the river enough so I don't support this---not enough "cut backs" in the human foot prints

Topic Question 7: Some day I hope, but NO day use cars in the valley--day use visitors would have to take bus from El Portal or from the place on 120 there and all electric buses too. And only people who have camp reservations or hotel, Lodge reservations and plan to stay at least one night in the valley get to drive in, in their RV or car. Of course people who work in the valley will have their ID to drive in. Other National Parks like Zion National Park does this.

Topic Question 8: If day use visitors couldn't drive in and out, then maybe more employees could live in the valley and work and there would be less traffic and pollution from employees driving in and out of the valley every day.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 49 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 7: I like many of the ideas put forward, fhe removal of 3 bridges, the restoration of the concession stables and the restoration of Housekeeping Camp. I also appreciate the notion of a 'roundabout' and pedestrian 'tunnel'.

Topic Question 8: An increase in Day-use.

Topic Question 9: Trout fishing. (Floating devices 'messes up' fishing).

Comments: The consequences of each Plan could be made clearer, like the traffic flow with the removal of Stonemans Bridge etc.

Correspondence ID: 50 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, they do.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 51 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Alternative 1 does.

Topic Question 2: I like this alternative the best. It seems like it offers the most protection and needed restoration, while allowing access for people to enjoy it also.

Topic Question 3: Better than 3

Topic Question 4: Better than 4

Topic Question 5: Better than 5

Topic Question 7: I prefer Alternative 1

Topic Question 8: The other alternatives concern me, because I think they allow too many people and activities near the river per year, which would not allow the river ecosystems to recover and thrive.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 52 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 00:29:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: They do because they try to keep the wilderness wild.

Topic Question 2: This is the best concept because it insures that the Yosemite Valley will not be overrun by commercial ventures and people. I am in favor of this concept.

Topic Question 3: Should not be implemented

Topic Question 4: Should not be implemented

Topic Question 5: Should not be implemented

Topic Question 6: Should not be implemented

Comments: I am in favor of Alternative Concept 1 because it employs the least density of people and commercial enterprises. When I was growing up and visited Yosemite it was overrun by commercial enterprises. Yosemite is a treasure that we need to cherish. Let's keep it wild and as smog-free as possible.

Correspondence ID: 53 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Eliminate all horses and pack stock from Yosemite National Park because they pollute the Merced and Tuolumne water systems.

Topic Question 2: Eliminate all horses and pack stock from Yosemite National Park because they pollute the Merced and Tuolumne water systems.

Topic Question 3: Eliminate all horses and pack stock from Yosemite National Park because they pollute the Merced and Tuolumne water systems.

Topic Question 4: Eliminate all horses and pack stock from Yosemite National Park because they pollute the Merced and Tuolumne water systems.

Topic Question 5: Eliminate all horses and pack stock from Yosemite National Park because they pollute the Merced and Tuolumne water systems.

Topic Question 6: Eliminate all horses and pack stock from Yosemite National Park because they pollute the Merced and Tuolumne water systems.

Topic Question 7: Eliminate all horses and pack stock from Yosemite National Park because they pollute the Merced and Tuolumne water systems.

Topic Question 8: Eliminate all horses and pack stock from Yosemite National Park because they pollute the Merced and Tuolumne water systems.

Topic Question 9: Eliminate all horses and pack stock from Yosemite National Park because they pollute the Merced and Tuolumne water systems.

Comments: RESTORE HETCH HETCHY!!!

Correspondence ID: 54 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: National Defense League Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 09:39:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have been visiting parks since I was a child. To transform them in any manner other than their pristine nature is wrong. Preservation: to keep from harm, damage, danger, evil:to protect. To open any park to outside interest will open Pandora's Box to Disneyland and all that follows. Money as a priority will destroy---money and nature are not part of the same equation when it comes to nature.

Correspondence ID: 55 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please do not eliminate roadside parking, reduce camp site numbers, or fence the El Cap meadow. Doing any of these things will decrease visitor use and enjoyment of the park. Yosemite Valley is a unique place in that it is both stunningly beautiful and easy to access. Maintaining ease of access should be a priority. Many of the people who go there have the thrill of their lives when they see a bear, or stand in the spray of a waterfall, or curl up in a (borrowed) sleeping bag to spend their first night ever outdoors. These types of moments can permanently change a person's attitude towards nature and facilitating these experiences should be the Valley's priority. There are plenty of other places in the National Park System that are true wilderness areas where environmental concerns can be paramount. In Yosemite Valley, the needs of the visitor must come first, or we risk

alienating the public.

Correspondence ID: 56 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: DNC Parks and Resorts @ Yosemite Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 11:32:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, all alternatives address the issues. Especially important are the alternatives that address overcrowding and use capacities, because these have been affecting the Valley greatly.

Topic Question 2: I think that permits should be required for private vehicles only. The problem isn't so much too many people in the Valley and along the river corridor as it is too many cars. There should be parking provided outside the park and more shuttle services from outside the park so that people can still access the Valley. There should be bus service from Fresno and the airport there!!! If there is hotel lodging reduced, I think that camping should be increased, but spread out along the Valley more to decrease congestion. The West Valley, near El Cap, would have room for another campground and shuttle service should be provided out there.

Topic Question 3: I think the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp has minimal impact on the river corridor, unlike much of the infrastructure in Yosemite Valley. The High Camps are an historic part of the park and provide a unique experience of solitude and the backcountry for people who otherwise would not be able to enjoy the Loop. Also, how would the High Camps Loop work if you take out one of the camps? Please do not remove it, but consider relocation to minimally affect the river corridor.

And thank you for suggesting removal of the Southside Drive through Stoneman Meadow. That meadow has been cut in half for too long! People can still access it via boardwalks, and a road through the Boystown area sounds like a quite feasible alternative!

Topic Question 4: Reducing commercial services is the way to go. People don't need so many gift shops and hotels to experience the serenity and beauty of the park. If anything, these structures, and the congestion they cause, diminish that experience. There are plenty of shops in the towns along the way to the park.

As far as employees living outside the Valley, it would be a large adjustment for me, I know. A large part of why I work here is the be able to live, work and play in the Valley and share my love of it with others. There would have to be very regular bus service for employees and cost controls on housing in El Portal. I don't think it will be popular with employees, though I understand that most of NPS already don't live in the Valley.

Removal of some but not all of Housekeeping Camp (as in the alternative) sounds like the best option to me. The Merced banks along this section are highly eroded and bare because people can camp so close to the shore. Reduction of housing and restoration along the banks would allow people to enjoy the river while also letting the river be free-flowing and wild.

Topic Question 5: The commercial rafting question should be addressed: If anything, there should be a reduction in the number of rafts allowed to go down the river. There should be a reservation system so that people can plan their vacations to include rafting, and not just first-come-first-serve. And if the reduction does not fix the litter, bank erosion and crowding that we see now, then commercial rafting should be eliminated. I have a problem with this slightly, however, because not everyone has their own raft, and especially if they are trying to take a bus rather than a private vehicle into the Valley, they cannot carry it with them.

Topic Question 6: Please do not expand the peak total visitor use for the Valley. There are not places to put all the cars, and the Valley literally turned into a parking lot many days last summer. People should be encouraged to talk public transit and to not drive around the Valley in their own vehicles once they arrive. NPS Traffic has been trying to keep things flowing in past years, but it still didn't seem that effective because of the sheer amount of people in the Valley.

Also, the Valley Shuttle Bus system should be expanding in the summer because I've seen many buses crammed full of visitors without room for more. They simply drive past the stops, leaving visitors waiting. And please add bike racks to the shuttles and YARTS buses.

Topic Question 7: I prefer alternative two because of the lowered visitor use numbers and reductions in concessions. Please keep Merced Lake High Camp, and parts of Housekeeping, but reduce the amount of lodging and parking to encourage use of alternative transport. Again, I think the amount of cars in the Valley is a major problem, and I like the idea of a long-term parking lot in El Portal for people who will be staying in the Valley long term is a good idea. Backpackers should still have an option for camping, but perhaps move the camp farther from the river.

Topic Question 8: I am very concerned about Alternative 5 and it's plan to increase visitation to the Valley. I do not think that the park can accommodate the increased use, regardless of infrastructure increase or better traffic management.

Comments: When I think about the history of the park (what little I know, even after working here for 6 seasons), I know that many things have changed with regards to use. Two examples come to mind: the Fire Fall and the pictures I've seen of camping in the meadows. Both seemed to be time-honored traditions that were loved by Valley visitors. But as knowledge of the delicate ecosystems increased, and as Valley visitation increased, it became necessary to eliminate these functions. And life here went on, and it was improved. Please keep conserving this beautiful place, and do what you must to manage increased demand--not

by allowing more vehicles and more lodging, but by encouraging people to have a more primitive experience through camping, biking and public transport. You don't need to see the Valley by car--keep developing alternatives for people who want them! Thanks for everyone's hard work on this plan.

Correspondence ID: 57 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes.

Topic Question 2: I think that it looks great.Many good ideas to benefit everyone and everything.

Topic Question 3: " "

Topic Question 4: " "

Topic Question 5: " "

Topic Question 6: " "

Topic Question 7: I liked all of them.

Topic Question 8: I'm not sure I have the answer to that one.

Topic Question 9: No.

Comments: This is a great way to get feedback from people who care about places like that.I hope that it all goes through.

Correspondence ID: 58 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 13:34:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, but the first ones are pretty harsh. Ideal maybe, but given the popularity of the valley, not really reasonable.

Topic Question 2: Don't like the removal of lodging and camping units without replacing them somewhere else. Convert the entire Yosemite Lodge to day use?? NO NO! If you remove the 4 bridges, what happens to those heavily used trails? Can you replace the bridges with bicycle-friendly and river friendly bridges?? like Sentinel bridge- Don't see any need to remove the historical housing at Ahwahnee meadow. Housekeeping camp does need to get out of the flood zone.

Topic Question 3: Do not eliminate raft rentals - most folks don't have their own appropriate rafts and life jackets - and floating the river is an amazing experience!!! Do NOT reduce lodging at all, move units away from the river, but don't eliminate them!! Housekeeping to day use a good idea. Do NOT eliminate day horse/mule rides. Leave Merced HSC alone. Good to add more RV spaces.

Topic Question 4: Better - like the new camping spots. Do not like eliminating Merced HSC!! or the stables in the valley. When you relocate things to El Portal - that just increases the traffic on the road between El Portal and the valley - which is bad enough now! Like getting some campsites back to River Campgrounds. If you remove the 4 bridges, replace them with bicycle-friendly and river friendly bridges to continue the foot and bike traffic routes.

Topic Question 5: Getting better - but don't eliminate raft rentals.... at least this one doesn't mess with Merced HSC and the stables.

Somewhere between Concept 4 and 5 would be great. The valley can handle more people IF there are places to put them - these alternatives increase places to be.

Topic Question 6: Now we're getting there! Love the idea of campground by El Capitan - that gets the climbers down there... Love having shuttle service to the west end of the valley- New lodging units and camping spaces badly needed!! Not removing bridges or stables - yeah!

Topic Question 7: Love Alternative 5 - adds lodging and camping spaces. Leave stables and Merced HSC. Great to have some camp spots back at Upper and Lower River. Love adding more RV spaces in Upper Pines. Leaves Yosemite Lodge alone, except to add more units. The valley can handle more people IF there are places for them to be.... picnic areas especially needed!

Outlying parking lots fine as long as shuttle service is adequate.

Topic Question 8: I don't agree with your "removal" list - many people who hike the trail up to Vernal and Nevada NEED food when they come down - the snack shack is badly needed! Just do something to make sure trash doesn't get all over the place. Why eliminate the Lodge swimming pool? or the Post Office?? They aren't near the river, and folks can swim in the pool and not in the river. The housing you refer to isn't anywhere near the river itself. ?? What are the alternative places to put those? Agree that the Ahwahnee tennis court and golf course can go - hardly ever used. Facilities to be relocated - why? Bike and raft rentals are at bus stop and handy to the river. Please do NOT remove the Wawona campground - it's a lovely place to stay! Ditto Lower Pines - love that place!! Where are backpackers supposed to stay?? Day Use parking area is already nude - keep it, and organize it. Moving it farther north is good. Why are we repurposing the Sport Shop? Many people buy equipment there that they need to enjoy hikes, etc.

Topic Question 9: I applaud your "dismissed from further analysis" list. That should help stop rumors about access to the valley. As much as people gripe about a crowded valley - the crowding is caused by lack of places to be - picnic places, more camping spaces, more lodging spaces (since foreigners/commercial tours take up so much of them!!).

Comments: I don't think there is a need to reduce the number of people who can be in the valley compared to "what happens now" - just increase places to park, bus service, picnic places, camp places, etc. - then there won't be "angry overflow" - the valley can accommodate more of those services - for a while. But it is important to get stuff OUT of the high water line. Having another huge flood like Jan. before shouldn't happen again for a while - and if it does, oh well.... in the meantime, let folks enjoy the Valley. It's a pretty special place....

Correspondence ID: 59 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 13:42:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Within the spectrum desired by park planners

Topic Question 2: Why impact the El Portal Area? Isn't that area a narrower river canyon?

Isn't it safer to use the commercial rafts that won't introduce the possibility of a foreign plant or animal? I rafted down the river on one of the DNC raft and got an orientation on proper river etiquette plus I got to see the valley without driving my vehicle. This is a great way for impaired enthusiasts to see the Valley.

Topic Question 3: Not everybody is able to carry around camping gear. Reducing the lodging eliminates those who are planning on coming into the Valley to stay at one of the facilities. These visitors don't drive around the Valley. They park their rental and use the shuttle system.

Topic Question 4: I've been to the High Camps. The manager talked extensively about the history of the park as well as the principles of "Leave no Trace". As I get older I find primitive camping (which I used to do more frequently) very difficult. Carrying the proper equipment becomes, honestly, impossible. These camps offer the experience I used to enjoy but may not be able to in the future. With only 5% of the park developed (most of that in Yosemite Valley) I cannot imagine the impact of a few camps being substantial. For some folks this may be their first and only backcountry experience. It would be a shame to eliminate them.

Topic Question 5: I do believe a shuttle system for visitors could be beneficial but I am concerned with paving another area which has it's own special beauty and fragile environment.

I think that camping is the family experience that the "locals" value. It is economically achievable. Also, it connects the whole family to nature. This creates another generation of humans who appreciate the wilderness in it's various forms.

Topic Question 9: I read a comment about biking. I think biking and triking (3 wheelers for those who have difficulty biking) should be encouraged.

It seems the percentage of roadways throughout the entire park is very small. Does prohibiting parking off the side of the road eliminate as many difficulties as it causes? I notice emergency vehicles are now trpped in traffic due to the recently installed curbs.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 60 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: National Parks Conservation Association Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 14:02:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: i support the purpose and goals of the Merced River Plan.

i would like to submit a comment on the use of measuring words in the Merced River Plan Workbook.

the use of SI metric measures such as the meter for measures of length would be highly appropriate for a national park and a world heritage site. the use of SI units would also provide information that is more comparable for more readers and users of the plan (scientists, public, and so forth).

please also consider the use of reference comparisons wherever helpful for reader understanding. such comparisons so often do not depend on a parenthetical reference to pre-metric measuring words. for example, "about the distance from A to B", or "about the area of 4 olympic sport sites".

thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 61 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 15:39:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Generally, yes.

Comments: My preference is to limit ORV access and vehicle access as much as possible in favor of walking trails and buses to trailheads.

Correspondence ID: 62 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 15:50:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes. The options are clear and well delineated.

Topic Question 2: The traditional Yosemite experience is eliminated. Over 60 years I have used all of the facilities, frequently in peak season. Age appropriately I have enjoyed them all and the different feeling of the various areas has been fun to revisit even when I was to old for camping or the housekeeping camp. The Lodge is essential. No way on 1.

Topic Question 3: Bad compromise.

Topic Question 4: Best Alternative. Except that RV's are a poor use of park space, air quality, and fuel. Run busses from the adequate RV resources outside the park. Also serving the off park lodging. 15000 visitors per day is pushing the limits of enjoyability but is tolerable and those of us in the know can avoid the big weekends. Flexible access is an excellent idea. Those turned away can be given a guide to the many alternatives, especially Hetch Hetchy, Wawona and the redwood groves. They won't be disappointed. Even Groveland and Mariposa are turning into destination points.

Topic Question 5: Too many people.

Topic Question 6: Grand Central valley.

Topic Question 7: As noted 3 without RVs. A good balance of ecology, the traditional Yosemite experiences and opportunities for enjoying natural quiet and solitude in walt to areas of the valley. I would like to see the Lodge expanded in 3. If you can afford a RV you can afford the lodge. Fly in visitors, foreign and eastern US are not self sufficient for lodging and food.

Topic Question 8: NO STINKY POLLUTING SPACE HOGGING INSULAR RVS. They can watch the Burns movie on their TV outside the park. No need for them to do it on the valuable real estate on the valley floor.

Topic Question 9: 2 with an expanded lodge from 5 might be best.

Comments: As I am an informal Yosemite guru for visitors from all over, the major concern I hear is availability of hotel type lodging in the valley. Unless we live within driving distance even the sleeping bag for Curry tents is too much excess baggage. Many of my visits have been reunion types with all ages represented and even the houskeeping camp requires too much gear. The Cabins at Curry are fine (those 40 in the rock fall should be replaced but alas I know not where.)

Yosemite is a once in a lifetime experience for many and camping is generally not an option. So please, in any plan expanding

the Lodge should be a priority.

Correspondence ID: 63 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See previous.

Topic Question 2: see prev.

Topic Question 3: see prev.

Topic Question 4: see prev.

Topic Question 5: see prev

Topic Question 6: See prev.

Topic Question 7: repeat: 2 with Big lodge from 5. No RVs.

Topic Question 8: Drive in camps are a poor use of space and encourage "car camping" which should not be part of the Yosemite experience and ruin the camping experience for the rest of the campers. Stick the cars out of sight or at least in a pack, and let the grounds be a camp.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 64 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 18:24:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Having red all the proposals... I feel that they all have flaws. I understand how we are trying to protect the environmental for our future generations, but all concepts remove multiple guest services and community services. That being said, I don't think there needs to a major stream lining all parts the Valley in general.

Starting transportation in the valley need a major overhaul, from the roads themselves to public & mass transportation into Yosemite. Understandably there are far too many cars are entering the valley at peak visitation times, but making it even more difficult or more exclusive to visit the park is not the right thing to do. If anything we should be encouraging more people to visit the park in a safe and less environmentally disruptive manor such as bussing or trains.

Also i'm sure there are ways to maintain current services of the valley while maintaining a responsible stewards of this beautiful treasure of a park. Many of those services are huge part of american culture and generations have grown up with those services and the are as much of a part of Yosemite memories as Yosemite Falls or Half Dome.

To summarize i guess what i was to say is, as a citizen who has falling in love with the Yosemite, had I not been able to see and experience this park it would be very hard for me to care about our national Parks. I feel that if other citizens never get a chance to see this wonder of nature, they will never care about protecting it.

Correspondence ID: 65 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Student and former NPS &DNC employee Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 21:23:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Comments pertaining to page 13 of the Merced River Plan Workbook:

Segment 1: Management Considerations and Potential Management Options

4) Merced Lake High Sierra Camp--Wilderness & ORV Impacts

I feel that the document (the entire workbook) is very transparent and thorough. I am against the complete removal of Merced Lake HSC but I think that the amount of impact can be remedied without removal. I think maintaining camp as is, while "monitoring and restructuring operations towards minimizing impact"--as stated in Option 4E, is my first choice as an alternative. The other alternatives (with the exception of 4F:Closing Merced Lake)all fall along the lines of 4E: to monitor and restructure operations towards impact. Overuse of trails and excess waste could be drastically reduced by limiting the food supply brought in and waste brought out by mules to only staff. Reducing the amount of accommodations?reducing the capacity of guests from 60 to 42 beds, banning the use of shower facilities to guests, serving cold meals only, and not allowing walk-ins

would greatly reduce impact. These are all very realistic options and directly correlate to 4E. As of now, I believe that implementing at least some of these remedial options would be more than enough to ensure the quality of the environment in and around Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

Comments: To the Merced lake Plan Committee:

I am commenting on the Merced River Plan as a former NPS employee and DNC employee. It is easy to see, firsthand, why the High Sierra Camps are so special to all of its employees-the joy it has and will continue to bring us, our friends, and our families-in Yosemite those are usually mean the same thing. However, that is just a small fraction of concern in the wider scape of things. It cannot be overlooked that the people who travel to these places are not all able-bodied and not all lucky enough to be as educated in wilderness as others. The removal of Merced Lake (or any of the high camps) will take those chances-those learning experiences away from people. Not everyone is confidant, healthy, and/or knowledgeable enough to head into the backcountry alone or without a guide. Many people (some more obvious than others) would say to that, "Why don't visitors just go hike miles into the wilderness and go camping without accommodations?" Because. It's not that easy for everyone. There is such deep history in the High Sierra Camps and for many of the families that have spent their summers-some, every summer for 50+ years- at Merced Lake it would take something sacred away from them. I have spent the best summers and the best times of my life at Yosemite's High Sierra Camps and look forward to going back for as long as I can. Each year becomes exponentially better than the last. So what is to be lost if Merced Lake is just some place that used to exist in the woods? For future high-campers: friendships, connections to the wilderness , connections with guests and helping them create lasting memories, the ability to educate others about wilderness-to influence. For legacy-campers: history, memories, and tradition. By removing Merced Lake you would be removing history and a unique platform for those to learn and teach.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 66 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 22:33:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I believe they address a limited scope of the problem

Comments: I have been the manager of May Lake HSC for 10 years. Our camp makes up a tiny fraction of the 5% of non-wilderness in Yosemite. Most of the impact that is a result of developement occurs in Yosemite Valley. Having said that, I do see areas of our operation where we can limit our impact. Our camp is similar to Merced lake's water system. We both pull water from a large resource that is then treated with filtration and chlorination. Waste water is released into a septic followed by a leach field, much like many California residences. The HSC manager monitors the water system every day. NPS backcountry utilities arrives frequently to check the system and make any adjustments. Korwin Kirk,the manager of BC utilities whom I respect for immensely, is very diligent with his work. His input on this issue is invaluable. There is NO release of water into the river. We could reduce our water consumption. Both camps use flush toilets and showers. While the cleanliness of the staff is important to me, I don't believe we need to offer showers for the guests. As for the toilets, we could switch to composting facilities although these have their own impact issues. As far as our impacting the trails, that is something that we try to minimize. We no longer provide linens. We are adding more solar power for lighting in order to reduce the amount of propane we haul. Most of all, we use mules! We are not building roads or using trucks and helicopters. We are using the traditional animals of the High Sierra for 3 months a year.

I'd like to point out another aspect of High Camps. Every night I talk about the history of the park. This brings an intimate feeling to the park. The more the guest knows, the more they feel connected to the park, the more pride they take in their relation with the park. I also discuss water conservation, fires, leave no trace, food storage, and other topics that can lead to a positive park experience for all. Guests, overnight campers, and day hikers frequently come into the high camp for information. Some of their problems are the result of ignorance; "What ate the handles of my hiking poles?" Others are simply asking for directions which unanswered could lead to a Search and Rescue operation; "I don't think you want to go that way it's dangerous. I think you should stay on the trail." High camp employees take a lot of pride in their camps and the backcountry. This is demonstrated by the amount of litter they pick up, the restorations they do in the camps, and the help they provide every day. We help lost people, hurt people, and people who don't even realize they are doing the wrong thing; "Your campsite is too close to the lake." We have put out forest fires. We have located lost people. We have carried injured people. WE HAVE SAVED PEOPLES LIVES. There is no doubt in my mind that without our high camp, park service would be using more of their resources for rescues, fires, missing people, and injuries.

In conclusion, the benefits of having a few remote tent camps in the backcountry far outweights the small amount of impact they may cause. We provide a place to learn. We provide access to the backcountry for the elderly and handicapped. We provide resources in an emergency. I truly believe this is a resource we want to keep.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 67 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17,2012 23:01:19

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Opening the meadows back up is a great idea. Protecting El Portal Valley Oaks is a must.

Do NOT reduce camping or lodging in Yosemite Valley!! There is a GIGANTIC problem with day-use visitors that have no place to park. The people that have accommodations in the park are not the problem!!!!

Also leave concession employees in the park. They need to live in the park so they can walk to work, most jobs do no pay enough for employees to afford cars or gas~~and we don't need more cars on the road!

Topic Question 4: Leave the concessioners management in the Valley. Transportation: Bus and transit options available to visitors. Real-time information on traffic and congestion provided. YES. Don't bother removing the Ahwahnee and Sugarpine bridges

More camping~~YES

Topic Question 8: Keep employees in the Valley so there are not more commuters. Put lodging back in Yosemite Valley to reduce day-use traffic. The amount of air pollution from vehicles will negate any concerns about river plans....

Comments: The trailer court would be a great location for private trailers. What was wrong with it before?

Keep high density (transient) housing out of Old El Portal. Where would all the water for all the new proposed buildings and people come from? More wells???

Leave the beautiful, historic bridges. Removal of the bridge downstream on Yosemite Creek has added to the amount of people having to cross the street at the Lodge intersection. That traffic crossing causes major auto back-ups and traffic jams that effect the whole east end of the Valley.

Correspondence ID: 68 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 11:19:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: To my mind, this is a bit of an unfair question. It seems to me that this question has less to do with protecting the river and more to do with satisfying the desires of people.

If the goal is to protect the river, all of the proposed plans need to be able to satisfy that goal. The general public is not qualified to make such assessments and asking them to do so is unfair to them, the process and the scientists. If there are facts, not politics, to support all of these plans in saying that they will protect the river for the life of the river, then there is no need to ask us for our opinion on the matter.

But I know that isn't the case. I know that none of these plans will protect the river for the life of the river. I know that what I'm being asked to do is to weigh in and sign off on a compromise that essentially says: Yes, this place is amazing and we want to keep it that way, but we also want to enjoy it as much as possible. So we're willing to trade off the promise of long term enjoyment for massive short term enjoyment.

So I feel that the real question being asked here is: Are you okay with the compromises we're making? Are any of these plans trading away too much of the future for enjoyment today?

To answer those questions, no I'm not okay with the compromises we're making and yes, we're trading away too much of the future for our enjoyment today.

Topic Question 2: Given that this plan places the most restrictions on usage, if I have to choose one of these plans this is the one that I'm most comfortable with.

Topic Question 6: Unacceptable.

While I've struggled many times to get a campground in the Valley, that's the way that it should be! Attempting to accommodate the enjoyment of more people in an area will never be satisfied.

Topic Question 7: * Less lodging, especially high impact lodging involving structures. * Less parking * Fewer visitors

Topic Question 8: I have a general concern that the plans leave tons of wiggle room and loopholes. As stated today, I feel that goals are defined in a way that is open to interpretation. What's "acceptable" to one administrator may not be to another. Perhaps

this has been done to keep things simple for the general population. But I'd like to see specifics.

I'm especially concerned with aspects that state the the river can be controlled, modified and altered to protect "critical" infrastructure. What is considered "critical"? It's areas like this that we are clearly placing our personal desires above the long term value of the river.

At the very least, please clearly define exactly what falls under "critical infrastructure" and other vague areas.

Topic Question 9: I'd like to know what happens in the event of a flood. I'd like to see the river have the freedom to flood the valley as it naturally would. To ensure that we do nothing to prevent this from happening, to let nature take its course.

Comments: While this might be slightly off topic, I have a general concern that this will turn into a shuffling of problems rather than a solution. Moving problems away from the river and into other areas of the park. This really wouldn't improve the health of the river. I'd like to know what provisions the park service has in place to protect the rest of the park from the increased pressures that restrictions in the valley could generate.

Correspondence ID: 69 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: several environmental groups Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 12:51:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I do not have the planbook but have stayed in the housekeeping units at Yosemite over a dozen times with my family and church group. Cutting back on them would be a huge loss as they are a way that we can afford to stay at Yosemite. They are a step up from camping and lying on the ground but you still feel like you are out doors. The beauty is incredible, in varying weather (all on May 1st.) The only areas that ever feel crowded are the tourist spots like Yosemite Falls that one can walk to on fairly level ground from the car or bus. No one seems to mind and you get to see a great cross section of people. The higher one hikes, the fewer people usually and one is rewarded with more solitude. The upper trails do not seem crowded.

Please keep access to Half Dome. One older man of our group climbed it into his late 70's or early 80's. It was hard when he had to stop, but his memories remained.

I don't know how you can emphasize to people to avoid Half Dome when slippery or to stay out of the frigid waters, but I know you make a good effort. A separate half slip with a simple warning/slogan/drawing might help--upon entering the park--especially on appropriate days. Also a notice that the Park can not warn about everything--use your head (for thinking and observing!)

Thank you for your work.

Correspondence ID: 70 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 13:06:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The alternatives are very well documented and I congratulate the authors on their work. I is clear that restoration of the riverbank is a priority with various impacts to the visitor experience.

Topic Question 2: I disagree with the restoration of the Merced Lake high sierra camp. this is an important visitor experience and tent cabins are a necessity for some hikers. as the population of baby boomers increases, the need for a camp becomes even more important. Maybe there is an option to move the toliets and lodge away from the river and lake and leave the camp site. Personally, i would like to return to this location again.

The very agressive reduction in land use management is impressive. however, I would reduced camping at Curry and not repurpose the lodge. I would also increase the price to stay at the lodge so there is a greater price differential between camp sites and lodge rooms. this would help with revenue.

I agree that administrative operations can be moved out of the valley.

Topic Question 3: comments same as concept 1

Topic Question 4: targeted riverbank restoration is a smart approach. Merced Lake HS Camp needs to stay with at least some tent cabins.

why not force people to park and use the bus like they do at Zion NP? Or charge a high usage fee for people who 'have to have' their car.

reducing Curry village is a must.

Topic Question 5: probably the best option if i had to choose one. possibly a good short term approach, but seems like you could get more agressive on restricng people traffic.

Topic Question 6: why increaese lodge rooms. if you need more capacity then you must not be charging enough money. it is a supply and demand thing. raise the price of lodge rooms (make that your revenue source), keep camping affordable so everyone can enjoy the park, and go to a lottery on camp sites if you need to manage demand.

Topic Question 7: concept 4 is best option

Topic Question 8: any that takes away the tent cabin in Merced

Topic Question 9: see above.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 71 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Yes. Need more campsites, less cars. Should clean up housekeeping and build duplex cabins like Zion. Should only allow cars in that have lodging and campsites. All day use cars park outside. Need more RV campsites with elect. and water hook up. Need more sewer dumps.

-Feedback on Alt 1 Not enough campsites.

-Feedback on Alt 2 Not enough campsites.

-Feedback on Alt 3 This would be my first choice. This is a good alternative. It adds more campsites. Clean up housekeeping, tear it down and add cabins. Open back up Upper and Lower River campsites. Need more RV parking with elect. and water hook ups. More sewer dump stations. Day use parking ouside of valley?

-Feedback on Alt 4 This would be my third choice. Added campsites but only 30 walk-in sites at Upper River. No reductions at housekeeping. Tear down housekeeping and build cabins, like Zion

-Feedback on Alt 5 This would be my second choice. Good number of campsites. Need RV campsites with elect. and water hook ups. More dump stations. Tear down housekeeping and build cabins. More outside the valley parking for day use.

-Which alternative (s) or ideas from any alternative do you prefer? Alt #3

-Which alternative(s) or ideas from any atlernative create new concerns? Alt 3. Signify reduced at housekeeping.

-Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered? RV Campsites (more than 40) with elect. and water hook ups. More dump stations. Tear down housekeeping and build duplex cabins like Zion. More parking outside the valley for day use.

Correspondence ID: 72 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

General comment: I have a hard time understanding that our Congress wants to save future generation from the deficit but seem to not care as much about what nature has given us to enjoy. Do we want to deprive future generations the same opportunity?

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 73 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Y explore Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 16:50:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, I believe the alternatives are comprehensive and show a wide range of choices to make to achieve the

goals of the plan.

Topic Question 2: This is the strictest of the proposals and I believe it is intentional to find a common middle ground. There apre parts I do like about the plan and will comment on areas I have input:

3. This seems like a good area to protect the oak trees but adding a drip line in order for them to survive does not seem natural to me.

4. I believe this plan seems a bit harsh and don't think that the Delaware north Corp would allow for this to happen. I think it would be logical to remove portions of the lodge that encroach on the area of the river in question but not to remove the entire lodge.

5. This seeems like a sound option

6. I believe there needs to be more protection of the river in this targeted area. It is constantly being abused by users of the campsites.

7. No new campsites are needed here.

8. I don't think you need to ban all commercial use, but limits and permits seem like a good idea.

10. Agree

13. Removal of bridges seems necessary. I would like to see those bridges reformed as other structures to keep their historic integrity. It would also be interesting to see if the bridges could be moved to other locations of the park or even placed on certain trails or bike trails in the valley.

14. Good idea

Topic Question 3: 3. Reduce some traffic in the valley from employees

4. More reasonable than removing the entire lodge

5. Not sure I'd want to develop more parking lots in the valley.

6. Reasonable.

7. Reasonable alrternative to removing the entire site

8. I like the idea of keeping camping away from this area

9. I beleive limits are necessary. Not sure if a ban is necessary.

12. I would recommend the safest alternative in the rock fall zone.

13. Reasonable

14. No new RV site development.

15. Removal of bridges seems necessary. I would like to see those bridges reformed as other structures to keep their historic integrity. It would also be interesting to see if the bridges could be moved to other locations of the park or even placed on certain trails or bike trails in the valley.

16. Not against this. Hiking on crowded trails avoiding mules and their dung is no fun for the hikers on a hot summer day.

Topic Question 4: 4. Good idea if feasible.

5. Does not seem highly impactful.

6. I know that the Camp 6 parking is a cause of major traffic issues on congestion days but 750 seems like a lot of spaces to lose.

7. somewhere between this plan a and Concept 2 seems reasonable.

8. Those sites seem crowded already but if it can be done reasonably, I wouldn't be against it.

9. Remove all 3 bridges

10. Agree

11. I would recommend the safest alternative in the rock fall zone.

12. No new RV sites

13. Remove pack station

Topic Question 5: 4. Expansion of the shuttle service (times and areas of travel) are crucial to any plan. Any new parking lot would have to be as discreet in appearance as possible.

5. This could work well

6. Any new parking lot would have to be as discreet in appearance as possible.

Topic Question 6: I believe this is not feasible at all and also believe it was intentionally added to find the middle ground.

Topic Question 7: I answered to each bullet point in the previous sections.

Topic Question 8: There is always a concern when you plan to add large parking lots in a national park especially in such a relatively small valley.

Comments: No matter what options are created, I believe it will be important to have a shuttle that spans the entire valley and that shuttle should run from 5am to midnight. If you want people to leave their cars somewhere, they must have full access to every area of the valley via bus. If I am hiking at Happy Isles, I would leave my car at an alternative bus stop if those accommodations were made.

Correspondence ID: 74 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 17:50:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See below

Topic Question 2: I dislike it.

Topic Question 3: I dislike it.

Topic Question 4: I dislike it.

Topic Question 5: I dislike it.

Topic Question 6: I dislike it.

Topic Question 7: None - see below.

Comments: I strongly dislike all of the alternatives presented. Each removes facilities, and I disagree with removing any of the facilities listed, including both pools, the tennis court, the former golf course, the lodge pool snack stand, the post office, the NPS Volunteer Bldg. (are you KIDDING???), the Yosemite Lodge Housing (are you KIDDING!!!), the Lodge Highland Court housing, the Happy Isle Snack Stand, the Wawona stables,and the Curry Village Ice Rink. I don't have a strong feeling about the NPS Finance Trailer, but it needs to be somewhere convenient for the employees involved.

The Park and the above facilities are all a part of California's history and untold hundreds of thousands of family histories.

Access to Yosemite needs to be broadened, not limited! Of course, we must be good stewards of the park, and I support many efforts to protect it, such as the shuttles, trail maintenance, and meadow boardwalks. Everyone is capable of enjoying the park in a different manner, and currently that breadth of preference and ability is facilitated by a variety of venues and options. Not everyone can hike the back country (I have, but not everyone of every age can!). Having many options, venues, and facilities spreads the people out and mitigates overcrowding at many of the natural sites. I believe it is downright immoral and unconstitutional to exclude people by closing facilities, to exclude people by charging fees for anything in the park (such as parking or hiking to Half Dome) by limiting parking, by removing campgrounds and hotel accommodations, and by increasing the cost of visits so much that only the elite can afford time in Yosemite.

FYI, my perspective comes from visiting the Park as a family tradition beginning when I was a little girl, from staying at every possible place including campgrounds, Curry, the Lodge, El Portal, Yosemite West, Wawona, The Redwoods, and Oakhurst, from visiting the various sequoia groves, from spending time in the Valley as well as Tuolumne Meadows, from hiking on the John Muir Trail, valley trails, and Tuolumne Meadows trails (May Lake, Elizabeth Lake, and more), from biking, from rafting, and from utilizing many of the facilities and services that are being considered for elimination.

I am also a long time member of the Yosemite Conservancy and have attended the Fall event in Wawona. I spoke with the Park Superintendent and the head of the conservancy, and feel totally betrayed by what is going on. The goals of the "plan" are just plain wrong. I already feel excluded from the Park because it is so expensive to be there and so difficult to park. Instead of staying a week, which is a minimum for me, I am barely managing 3 days next August, at great expense. It's not enough time to acclimate to the altitude before serious hiking, and it is a financial hardship. Any "plan" for the Park should address such concerns. Where are the professionals who are creative planners with a balanced outlook? This entire situation has gone on far too long, cost way too much money, and upset many thousands of people. Please take time for thoughtful reconsideration of plans, priorities, and perspectives.

I have one additional concern: this form does not offer a "print" option. I am unable to print this comment section of my response to you, and I am not happy!

Correspondence ID: 75 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Retiree/ Disabled with Multiple Sclerosis Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 18:41:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: MRP Topic Questions: 1. Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Explain. NO

[Also please note paragraph 10, added below, which describe the qualifications of the person offering comments.]

None of Alternative Concepts 1, 2, 3, 4, nor 5 consider the following issues, principally related to Land Use Management:

A. THERE IS NO PROHIBITION OF GOLD MINING in the MRP Topic Alternatives, nor mention of the interrelationship to recently enacted California Legislation on Gold Mining.

There are many cable television programs on gold mining using vacuum, sluicing, and dredging methods in the State of Alaska. Principal areas currently receiving publicity include various portions of the Yukon Region and in the Bearing Sea and related areas. The potential environmental impact to the areas involved is readily observable. These locations often are directly related to the ?Alaska Gold Rush Era.? Before Yosemite was declared a National Park in the midst of the ?California Gold Rush Era,? in the mid 1840-50s.

Considering its reputation as a Gold-bearing source, Mariposa County and the MERCED RIVER & its tributaries appear to be prime targets for similar attempts and gold exploration, based on Mariposa County?s history. Any such activity should clearly be banned in each Alternative Concept because of damage to the Environment. This possibility particularly affects the MRP first and last Goals:

?? Promote the river?s ability to shape the landscape, reducing impediments to free-flow, improving geologic/hydrologic processes, restoring flood-plains and meadows, and protecting water quality...? [emphasis added]

?? ...Provide clear direction on land use and associated development in the river corridor, allowing for the infrastructure necessary to support public use while protecting and enhancing river values....? [emphasis added]

The State of California has passed SB 670 and AB 120 which prohibit the use of vacuum or other suction dredging equipment for in-stream mining in any California river, stream or lake effective August 6, 2009. The moratorium will remain in effect until the California Department of Fish and Game completes and environmental review of dredging permits and revises its regulations. For more information see http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/folsom/rocks.html . On March 16, 2012 the Department of Fish and Game took final action to adopt updated regulations governing suction dredge mining under Fish and Game Code section 5653 et seq., the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). MINING WHICH IS NOT PROHIBITED BY THE MORATORIUM established by SB 670 and AB 120 does not prohibit or restrict: --non-motorized recreational mining activities, including panning for gold; -it also does not prohibit or restrict some other forms of mining, including, [for example, practices known as high banking, power sluicing, sniping or using a gravity dredge,] so long as gravel and earthern materials are not vacuumed with a motorized system from the river or stream. The

method of mining known as booming, is prohibited with 100 yards of any river, stream or lake. It is important for you to know that other environmental laws may apply to some of these mining practices. Be aware that Fish and Game Code section 5650 prohibits the placement of materials deleterious to fish, including sand and gravel from outside of the current water level, into the river or stream. Further, Fish and Game Code section 1602 requires that any person notify the Department of Fish and Game before substantially diverting or obstructing the natural flow of, or substantially changing or using any material from the bed, channel or bank of any river, stream or lake. Additional information is available at www.dfg.ca.gov/habcon/1600/ . RECOMMENDATION (1): PROHIBIT GOLD MINING of any kind in the all the MRP Topic Alternatives; and/or show the relationship of recent California Regulations [SB 670 and AB 120] the MRP Topic Alternatives.

B. THERE IS NO EXPLICIT RECOGNITION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES [ADA] REQUIREMENTS [Public Law Title 42] in the MRP Topic Alternatives

EDITORIAL NOTE: I carefully reviewed the portion of the Alternatives ?Dismissed From Further Analysis,? and I respectfully disagree with the ruling out of ?Provision of special access privileges to local residents, Californians, or US citizens.? [Namely those with Recognized Disabilities.] I believe that ?Reasonable Accommodation? required by the Americans With Disability Act of 1990 is in fact within the scope of the MRP Alternatives, and if omitted would constitute a violation of Federal Law-- Title 42 of the United States Code. I am a disabled person, and I do not believe that our viewpoint has been heretofore adequately represented. Please consult with other Disabled Advocates on this issue.

SECOND EDITORIAL NOTE: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 [?ADA?] was originally enacted in public law format, subsequently amended, and later rearranged and published by subject matter in the United States Code. The United States Code is divided into ?titles? numbered 1 through 50. Titles I, II, III and V of the ADA have been codified in Title 42 of the United States Code, beginning at section 12101. Title IV of the original public law format has been codified in Title 47 ? Telegraphs, Telephones, and Radiotelegraphs of the United States Code. This codification has resulted in the section numbers being changed. In the ADA [Title 42, Section 12101(a)], ?...The Congress finds that some 43,000,000 Americans have one or more physical or mental disabilities, and this number is increasing as the population as a whole is growing older.? According to Yosemite National Park statistics (http://www.nps.gov/yose/naturescience/park-statistics.htm), there were over 4.05 millions visitors in 2010, of whom 9% --or about 3.64 million of which international visitors. These statistics show that Yosemite National Park is a very popular destination for both domestic and foreign visitors. Statistics for the total number of disabled visitors annually is not stated. Congressional statistics associated with the original ADA in 1990 suggest the proportion of Yosemite?s annual visitors is probably significant and certainly is greater than the Congressional estimate of 43 million Americans in the year 2012 (not to mention disabled foreign visitors). The ADA [Title 42, Section 12101(b)] states in part: ?... to ensure that the Federal Government plays a central role in enforcing the standards established in this chapter on behalf of individuals with disabilities; and... to invoke the sweep of congressional authority, including the power to enforce the fourteenth amendment and to regulate commerce, in order to address the major areas of discrimination faced day-to-day by people with disabilities....? The ADA [Title 42, Section 12111 (5) (B) on Employment] exempts the United States, a corporation wholly owned by the government of the United States, or an Indian tribe as ?Employers? under the ADA. However, vendors and concessionaires still fall under the ADA as ?Employers.? So unless a wholly owned US corporation or an (Native) American Indian tribe becomes the vendors/concessionaires in Yosemite National Park, the intent of applicability of the ADA to the Park seems obvious. That intent is stated in Title 42, Section 12111 (9) or (10) on Reasonable Accommodation and/ or Undue Hardship. As areas used by the public, the ADA [Title 42, Chapter II, [Title II], Part B, Sections 12147 and 12148] apply to a public entity constructing (or altering) a facility used for designated public transport. This would appear to apply to bona fide Disabled visitors.

RECOMMENDATION (2): Disabled persons will be provided with Reasonable Accommodation Access using the Park entry station lanes reserved for busses and those with employee access permits; provided that the disabled person displays a ?Golden Access Passport (with Disabled Logo)? AND/OR a bona fide disabled License Plate or Disabled Placard. Disabled Persons shall not be made to wait in a queue for Park entry, behind non- disabled visitors. It would be unreasonable to make bona fide disabled persons to wait in a long queue, while persons with employee permits and tour buses to pass them by.

RECOMMENDATION (3): All of the Alternative Concepts speak to parking (throughout the river corridor), and either increase and/or decrease various parking area sizes, including potential increased Accommodation parking in some areas, and require proportionately more or fewer Designated Handicapped Accessible parking spaces. This would constitute a ?Reasonable Accommodation.?

Topic Question 2: 2. Feedback on Alternative Concept 1: Not Acceptable

Not Acceptable because of Land Use Management issues (Gold Mining and compliance with ADA requirements), stated above. Not acceptable because Total Accommodations permitted (Valley camping: 460; Valley lodging: 480) will have a severe economic impact on Mariposa County citizens and County Government revenue. Mariposa County relies upon 65% of revenues obtained through lodging unit taxes; lack of [or significant reduction to] these revenues may require other forms of income (such as increased property taxes), a greater loss of vital services?education, sheriff and fire-- increased County unemployment, as well as additional impact on the viability of local businesses. See the Mariposa Gazette, pages A-1 and A-10 (www.MariposaGazette.com).

Topic Question 3: 3. Feedback on Alternative Concept 2 Not Acceptable

Not Acceptable because of Land Use Management issues (Gold Mining and compliance with ADA requirements), stated above. Not acceptable because Total Accommodations permitted (Valley camping: 480; Valley lodging: 700) will have a severe

economic impact on Mariposa County citizens and County Government revenue. Mariposa County relies upon 65% of revenues obtained through lodging unit taxes; lack of [or significant reduction to] these revenues may require other forms of income (such as increased property taxes), a greater loss of vital services?education, sheriff and fire-- increased County unemployment, as well as additional impact on the viability of local businesses. See the Mariposa Gazette, pages A-1 and A-10 (www.MariposaGazette.com).

Topic Question 4: 4. Feedback on Alternative Concept 3 Not Acceptable

Not Acceptable because of Land Use Management issues (Gold Mining and compliance with ADA requirements), stated above. Not acceptable because Total Accommodations permitted (Valley camping:230; Valley lodging: 210) will have a severe economic impact on Mariposa County citizens and County Government revenue. Mariposa County relies upon 65% of revenues obtained through lodging unit taxes; lack of [or significant reduction to] these revenues may require other forms of income (such as increased property taxes), a greater loss of vital services?education, sheriff and fire-- increased County unemployment, as well as additional impact on the viability of local businesses. See the Mariposa Gazette, pages A-1 and A-10 (www.MariposaGazette.com).

Topic Question 5: 5. Feedback on Alternative Concept 4 Partially Acceptable

Not Acceptable because of Land Use Management issues (Gold Mining and compliance with ADA requirements), stated above. A second Choice Alternative because Total Accommodations permitted (Valley camping: 580; Valley lodging: 1000) will have a more modest economic impact on Mariposa County citizens and County Government revenue. Mariposa County relies upon 65% of revenues obtained through lodging unit taxes; lack of [or significant reduction to] these revenues may require other forms of income (such as increased property taxes), a greater loss of vital services?education, sheriff and fire-- increased County unemployment, as well as additional impact on the viability of local businesses. See the Mariposa Gazette, pages A-1 and A-10 (www.MariposaGazette.com).

Topic Question 6: 6. Feedback on Alternative Concept 5 Partially Acceptable

Not Acceptable because of Land Use Management issues (Gold Mining and compliance with ADA requirements), stated above. A First Choice Alternative because Total Accommodations permitted (Valley camping: 860; Valley lodging: 1500?a modest increase, at a most popular venue) and which may have the least impact on Mariposa County citizens and County Government revenue. Mariposa County relies upon 65% of revenues obtained through lodging unit taxes; lack of [or significant reduction to] these revenues may require other forms of income (such as increased property taxes), a greater loss of vital services?education, sheriff and fire-- increased County unemployment, as well as additional impact on the viability of local businesses. See the Mariposa Gazette, pages A-1 and A-10 (www.MariposaGazette.com).

Topic Question 7: 7. Which alternative(s) or ideas from any alternative do you prefer? 5 (4) ONLY PARTIALLY ACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 8: 8. Which alternative(s) or ideas from any alternative create new concerns? 1, 2 and 3 UNACCEPTABLE

All alternatives create new concerns in the areas of Land Use Management issues (Gold Mining and compliance with ADA requirements)

Yosemite Lodge being ?re-purposed? to Valley camping instead of Valley Contractor provided lodging. This action may essentially bring back the era of the very wealthy or famous staying at the prestigious Ahwahnee Hotel, and the non-wealthy or famous returning to living in tents. This is not the original concepts put forth by the original Yosemite settlers.

Topic Question 9: 9. Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Declare what is now defined as Yosemite National Park?including Hetch Hetchy dam and reservoir?as Native American Tribal Land-- and return it to the Awahneeches, Miwuk [Miwok?], Mono [&other] Native Americans, from whom we stole it in the first place ?in our greed-- amidst the 1848 Gold Rush. We did the same thing with ?Little Yosemite Valley to provide power and a water supply to others, from which they could profit.

Comments: 10. Description/qualifications of Person offering comments

Upon retirement, the commenter decided to build his own home within an easy drive to the Yosemite Valley, a place where he loved and worked during his college summers. He has been a relocated Mariposan for nearly 15 years, but his history of his "connection" with Yosemite never left him-60+ years and counting. He wanted to be close to the one place that one of any creed or belief could only consider as "God's Cathedral," a place of peace, solace and serenity that anyone of any creed would deem as such. And in spite of the ever-growing crowds, he wanted each of them, from wherever to enjoy. Let's stop the "tree-huggers" from taking this grandeur away from all of us.

Please know that the commenter is physically disabled, and his access is no long, hiking, climbing, swimming, etc.., but to just

enjoy the solitude and wonderful smell and natural sounds. But be it known, I do have Environmental, Health and Safety credentials from the past. I speak from experience.

BRIEF BIO A retired professional with over thirty years experience in Environmental Safety and Health program management in aerospace and electronics industries. Major strengths in leading diverse teams of technical professionals to develop and audit preventive programs, using planning, organizing and facilitating skills. Additional skills in teaching other professionals and in preparing and presenting regulatory and legislative discussion materials. A respected, thorough, well organized leader in Environmental Safety and Health. Possesed the following Credentials:

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science, School of Public Health, University of California at Berkeley, 1961

CERTIFICATIONS & AFFILIATIONS: 1977- 1997 Registered Professional Engineer (Safety), (#SF 1984), California (PE)

1974- 1997 Diplomate, American Academy of Industrial Hygiene, (#915) (CIH) (Certified in the Comprehensive Practice of Industrial Hygiene)

1992- 1997 Registered Environmental Assessor, (# REA-04389), California (REA)

Correspondence ID: 76 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite Conservancy Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes.

Topic Question 2: Alternative Concept 1 is my favorite, preferred concept. The only change I would make would be to slightly increase the number of campsites.

Topic Question 3: See above

Topic Question 4: See above

Topic Question 5: See above

Topic Question 6: See above

Topic Question 7: Alternative Concept 1.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 77 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 21:11:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Some do but some are too obviously aggressive or not aggressive enough to be considered as alternatives.

Topic Question 2: 1) No opinion 2) Too aggressive: removal of too much employee housing within the park will make it harder to retain long term employment. If anything, more housing is needed in the park, with some housing made available outside of the park. I believe there is a small number of associates who would love to live outside of the park but for the most part, the employees I've polled love living inside the park because of the convenience of not having to commute to work, or rather, being able to commute to work by foot or bike. 3) No opinion 4) Too aggressive: this is a historic site that has been in use for over 100 years. 5) Too aggressive: relocating this parking involves too aggressive of a plan. 6) Too aggressive: this is a historic site that needs to be preserved in some way. This is a very, very popular attraction for many guests in Yosemite Valley. 7) These areas should be converted into day use parking and picnic areas with covered pavilions for guest use. 8) Too aggressive: private paddling should be unregulated; commercial boating should be allowed, but perhaps scaled back and regulated a little more. 9) Too many parking spots removed. If anything, more parking is needed. 10) Boystown is a historic site and should remain. Lodging in ACTIVE rock fall zone should be removed. 11) I don?t think this is necessary. 12) I don?t think this is necessary. 13) WAY TOO AGGRESSIVE. Are you going to remove all of the large boulders in the Merced Canyon that obstruct the free-flow of the river? I think removing these bridges will encourage more driving as crossing the river will be more difficult on foot. If the free-flow of the Merced River is so important then the bridges should be redesigned so the span is not supported by pillars that enter the water. 14) Not specific enough. What restoration would be made or is necessary?

Topic Question 3: 1) No opinion 2) More reasonable than proposed in concept 1. 3) Not appropriate, in my opinion. As it is important for the park superintendent to be located within the park, it is important for the concessions GO to be located in the park. 4) More reasonable than proposed in concept 1. 5) I agree! We need more parking within the valley. 6) Where? 7) I agree with converting some of this site into day use and picnic areas, but think some lodging should remain as well. 8) Same as my

opinion on this in concept 1. 9) Same as my opinion on this in concept 1. 10) Same as my opinion on this in concept 1. 11) Same as my opinion on this in concept 1. 12) This is more reasonable, but I?m not sure it is necessary to remove the segment of road. 13) Not necessary. 14) I agree. I think we need more campsites since losing so many after the floods of 1997. 15) Same as my opinion on this in concept 1. 16) Too aggressive.

Topic Question 4: 1) No opinion 2) Employee housing portion too aggressive. No concession employee housing should be removed from the Valley as this will impact the ability of the concessionaire to capture long term employees. Long term employment is important as it results in passion and commitment to the Park. Parking portion I?m in agreement with. 3) Same as my opinion on this in concept 2. 4) I think increased parking is more important, especially if you?re adding additional camping in Upper Pines. 5) I agree. 6) Where? 7) Same as my opinion on this in concept 2. 8) I like this but think some of this area should be developed into picnic and day use, with covered pavilions. 9) Not as aggressive, and therefore better, but still think removing theses bridges will increase and encourage more driving since crossing the river will be too difficult. Bridges can be redesigned so the span does not need the support of pillars entering the water. 10) Don?t think this is necessary. 11) Same as my opinion on this in concept 2. 12) I like this better than what was presented in concept 2 as it adds walk-in camping sites. 13) I don?t know about this.

Topic Question 5: 1) No opinion 2) Same as in concept 3. 3) No opinion 4) I think that parking could be better managed in this area (as in organized so more parking is available in the same amount of space without further environmental impact) but I do not think this area should be considered for expansion of day use parking. 5) I agree 6) Same as my opinion in concept 3. 7) Where? 8) Same as my opinion on this in concept 2. I think that less is more, as in take baby steps and see where we are in 10, 20 or more years. 9) Same as my opinion in concept 3. 10) As stated before, I agree that picnicking and day use is important and should be considered in these areas, with covered pavilions so even in inclement weather guests can enjoy the areas. Parking and vehicle access must be a consideration if this goes through, otherwise, we still have a problem of too many cars. 11) I agree that removal of 40 units in the hazard zone is necessary. 12) I don?t think this is necessary. 13) I agree this would be good.

Topic Question 6: 1) Too aggressive. 2) No opinion. 3) Same as my opinion in concept 4. 4) A little bit of an expansion from the alternative in concept 4, that sounds fine to me. 5) Interesting alternative. I think keeping camping concentrated in the east end of the valley is better as it helps eliminate use of cars from guests who are here, as they can walk or bike to the facilities. 6) Too aggressive in the lodging part but agree with the additional parking. 7) Not in agreement with. Keep the ?new? camping in lower and upper river area. 8) Where? 9) Same as my previous opinions. 10) Same as my previous opinions. 11) Same as my previous opinions. 12) Same as my previous opinions. 13) Same as my previous opinions.

Topic Question 7: See responses to each concept.

Topic Question 8: See responses to each concept.

Topic Question 9: Here are a few of mine:

? Convert Southside Drive and Northside Drive to 3 lanes of traffic. Southside Drive would have 2 lanes entering the park and one leaving and Northside would have 2 lanes leaving and one coming in. This would allow guests who are going to the Lodge direct access without having to ?waste fuel? by FORCING them as far in as the Chapel. It would also allow guests leaving from the far eastern side of the park from having to congest the Lodge area by FORCING everyone to leave on the north side of the valley. This alternative would also allow for a pedestrian overpass to be developed in the Lower Falls area of the Lodge, where the current crosswalk is. This would allow pedestrians to cross the road without stopping traffic. All commercial/RV access to the Lodge would be restricted to coming ?up? Northside Drive and all commercial access going to the eastern side of the valley, or to the village area, would be restricted to coming ?up? Southside Drive. ? Realign sections of Southside Drive with the old road, specifically from swinging bridge to the chapel (but would be beneficial from El Cap crossover as well) and remove the section of road from Swinging Bridge to the Chapel. Maintain the bike path and other strategic points of foot or bike traffic. Increase pullout and parking capacity along road in all areas reasonable. ? As for Northside Drive follow similar alternative as described immediately above in reasonable sections from 3 Bros. to El Cap. ? Develop emergency response in El Portal. Relocate helicopter evacuations to El Portal. By removing the helicopter evacuations from the valley you will free up space in the Church Bowl area, which can be re-developed for better parking. You will also help with ?noise pollution? because the helicopter will not be in the Valley too long. ? Relocate the Clinic to the area in the village where fire & SAR are located. This area can become a medical/emergency response complex. The clinic area can be used for more parking. If not relocating helicopter evacuations to El Portal then include a landing zone in this area so Church Bowl is not needed. ? Increase parking at The Ahwahnee so more day visitors and guests have access. ? Insert round-about (traffic circle) at the Village intersection. ? Remove all non-essential NPS Housing. By that, I mean if an NPS position does not report to, or work in, the Valley, then they should be relocated to El Portal. Only SAR, LEO, and other essential administrative positions should be permanently located in the Valley. On this same thread, better ?high capacity? housing (like the Ranger Club) can be developed in the Valley to consolidate NPS housing. Seasonal employees, like interp rangers, can be housed there. This could help facilitate the removal of some housing in this area of the Valley; an area I noticed wasn?t mentioned at all in any of the alternatives. From my experience, this area is poorly developed and could be reorganized and re-developed to add additional parking, like maybe for tour busses. All historic structures should remain, if they are still extant.

Comments: I originally formulated my response based on the printed version obtained at the Visitor Center. Here is my answer to the first question presented from that response sheet.

1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternative?

There are plenty of alternatives, but not enough! However, reasonable and feasible are in the eye of the beholder. Are you a historian or naturalist? What is more important, restoring the valley to its pre-historic state where man only occupied it seasonally, if that, or, providing amenities to the public who come and support the park.

I think the idea of presenting the plan with 5 concepts is not effective. I think each 'issue' should be presented along with the suggestions for improving. For example:

Camp 6 Day Use Parking: 1) No change 2) Restoration of floodplain and riparian area; Removal/redevelopment of existing employee Tecoya housing area and relocation of parking northward to this site 3) Restoration of floodplain and riparian area; Relocation of parking northward to newly developed parking area on the west side of the village store complex. 4) Restoration of floodplain and riparian area; Relocation of parking northward to newly developed parking area at Church Bowl and the Clinic. 5) Etc?

Correspondence ID: 78 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community wants to make sure that Yosemite NPS document that the Paiutes were the original Native people of Yosemite.

Topic Question 2: The Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community wants to make sure that Yosemite NPS document that the Paiutes were the original Native people of Yosemite.

Topic Question 3: The Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community wants to make sure that Yosemite NPS document that the Paiutes were the original Native people of Yosemite.

Topic Question 4: The Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community wants to make sure that Yosemite NPS document that the Paiutes were the original Native people of Yosemite.

Topic Question 5: The Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community wants to make sure that Yosemite NPS document that the Paiutes were the original Native people of Yosemite.

Topic Question 6: The Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community wants to make sure that Yosemite NPS document that the Paiutes were the original Native people of Yosemite.

Topic Question 7: The Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community wants to make sure that Yosemite NPS document that the Paiutes were the original Native people of Yosemite.

Topic Question 8: The Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community wants to make sure that Yosemite NPS document that the Paiutes were the original Native people of Yosemite.

Topic Question 9: The Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Community wants to make sure that Yosemite NPS document that the Paiutes were the original Native people of Yosemite.

Comments: Any documentation, pamphlets, signs should have Paiutes in the lead, not Miwoks. Miwoks were not the original Indians of Yosemite. Miwoks were the Indian scouts for the Mariposa Battalion and traitors to the indigenous people of Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 79 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, I would say they do. There are a lot of factors to consider and the five concepts tackle these in varying ways.

Topic Question 2: Well thought out. I agree that the priority should be a major restoration of the Merced River corridor and a significant reduction in visitor numbers, facilities and services is an essential part of this.

Topic Question 3: Again, well thought out, but I do not feel that it goes far enough. I feel it is crucial that Land Use Management is heavily reduced. The number of visitors is still too high.

Topic Question 4: A lot of thought has clearly gone into this, but as I said above, I consider extensive restoration of the river

corridor to be the number one priority.

Topic Question 5: Restoration level is too low, in my opinion.

Topic Question 6: To increase peak total visitor use by 3,500, rather than reducing numbers, I feel would have a far-reaching and detrimental effect on the whole area.

Topic Question 7: Alternative Concept 1

Topic Question 8: The idea of increasing visitor numbers in Concept 5. I also feel the current level is too high, so Concept 4 which is looking to keep numbers the same, is not a viable option.

Topic Question 9: None that I can think of.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 80 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 09:08:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I guess that would depend on which concept you are referring to.

Topic Question 2: I would not support any concept that has a reduction in camping sites.

Topic Question 3: Although this concept has a small increase in camping site, the loss to the lodging is too large to support this concept.

Topic Question 4: I would support this concept because of the increase in camping, but would also prefer the lodging not to take a decrease.

Topic Question 5: I would not support this concept because it does not have enough increase in camping sites.

Topic Question 6: I definitely support this concept again because of the increase in camping sites. Not sure if I support the additional parking spaces. Also, I don't know if we need that much of an increase in lodging. Overall, though, I would still support this concept.

Topic Question 7: Camping increases from Concept 5.

Topic Question 8: Parking and lodging increases from Concept 5.

Topic Question 9: Maybe a combination of Concept 3 and 5, which would increase the amount of camping, but keep lodging and parking levels near the same.

Comments: As an avid camper to Yosemite for over 40 years, I would support any alternative that would increase the amount of camping sites. There is defintiely a shortage which can proven by the fact that most sites sell out within 5 minutes of the open reservation period. Alternatively, I have not heard many people complain of a shortage of lodging units. Although, I have have also lodged in Yosemite at times, I truly believe camping is best way to thoroughly enjoy the Yosemite experience and hopeful this process and outcome will enable people more ability to do that.

Correspondence ID: 81 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 10:48:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, it appears that the alternative address the stated goals.

Topic Question 2: See general comments below.

Topic Question 3: See general comments below.

Topic Question 4: See general comments below.

Topic Question 5: See general comments below.

Topic Question 6: See general comments below.

Topic Question 7: Option 5 - see general comments below.

Comments: Having lived in Yosemite Valley for 5+ years in the past, I can tell you that people want to come and enjoy the Park and any changes that are made that reduce or restrict this ability do not benefit the majority of the people that want to visit. They may benefit the special interests that want to control the Park but definitely do not benefit the taxpayers/tourists that provide the financing to support the Park. This will become more of an issue in the future with the NPS initiative to increase visitation to the parks and encourage urban dwellers to come experience the parks. Because of this, I believe it is foolish to even consider options 1, 2 or 3 and 4 should be considered only as a last resort. Option 5 is the best alternative by far as it increases the ability of visitors to experience the beauty and wonderous nature of Yosemite Valley while also providing for some reclamation and more eco-friendly development.

Correspondence ID: 82 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 10:49:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, overall NPS has done a good job. My main concern is that the proposed projects in El Cap meadow will be worse to the meadow than leaving it as is. Consequently, I like plans 1, 2, and 3, which appear to have no site-specific plan for the meadow.

On the other hand, I think that Yosemite Valley's main function is to provide outdoor experiences for everyone that wants to come, without restriction on numbers. Consequently, I like the maximum camping and day use numbers in options 4 and 5.

Topic Question 2: Yes, this is a good plan. Best part is that it leaves El Cap Meadow largely as is. Need more camping sites and day-use though.

Topic Question 3: Yes, this is a good plan. Best part is that it leaves El Cap Meadow largely as is. Need more camping sites and day-use though.

Topic Question 4: Yes, this is a good plan. Best part is that it leaves El Cap Meadow largely as is. Need more camping sites and day-use though.

Topic Question 5: This is a BAD plan. It is bad because of the proposed management changes to El Cap meadow. Boardwalks and platforms, and the constuction thereof, will impact the ecology of the meadow more than the soil compaction caused by informal trails. Boardwalks and platforms, and the constuction thereof, will also make the meadow into a man-made, urban experience.

The part of the plan that proposes more camping sites and day-use is good.

Topic Question 6: This is a BAD plan. It is bad because of the proposed management changes to El Cap meadow. Boardwalks and platforms, and the constuction thereof, will impact the ecology of the meadow more than the soil compaction caused by informal trails. In addition, chopping down trees to make better views of El Cap is not protective of teh ecology of the meadow or the river. Boardwalks, platforms, and chopping down old trees and will also make the meadow into a man-made, urban experience, contradicting the plan goal to provide "primitive recreation".

The part of the plan that proposes more camping sites and day-use is good.

Topic Question 7: I like plans 1, 2, and 3 because they do not propose heavy-handed restoration of El Cap meadow. I like the idea of having lots of camping and day use in the last two options. However, options 4 and 5 are overall BAD plans because they propose "restoration" to El Cap meadow that will be worse than doing nothing at all.

Topic Question 8: Proposed management changes to El Cap meadow (alternative 4 and 5), including boardwalks, platforms, and chopping down trees to get better views of El Cap, will be destructive to the ecology of the meadow:

1. Construction of facilities will cause soil compaction and other impacts.

2. Boardwalks will shade vegetation, killing it.

3. Posts and support materials will create a cement footprint in the meadow that previously didn't exist, destroying the land

underneath and drastically altering the ecology of the area underneath the boardwalk.

4. Treated lumber, cement posts, and/or plastic will discharge arsenic and other toxics into the river.

5. Creation of man-made facilities in the meadow will destroy the natural feel and scenic value of the meadow.

6. Chopping down trees to get better views of El Cap is not in keeping with any of the goals outlined in the Plan (right?).

Topic Question 9: 1. Find out how much of a problem soil compaction in El Cap meadow really is. Do studies.

2. Post signage asking users not to impact the meadow

3. Post signage directing users to a single primitive trail with no boardwalk.

Comments: Please leave El Cap meadow alone!

Correspondence ID: 83 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The overall stated goal to provide for public recreation and resource use seems to be a mistatement as all these plans attempt to do just the opposite. As with all government projects once again instead of building from what we have we want to start over.

Topic Question 2: If the goal is to restrict this wonderful resource to as few people as posible can experience it you have a winner. These natural resources are meant to be enjoyed not isolated for the privilaged few. We need to be improving access and working to limiting the impact. This is not the answer.

Topic Question 3: Reducing the infrastucture that currently works makes no sense, moving more people to the edges of the park requiring more transportation needs is only going to make the congestion worse and have a far greater impact on the environment. Less overnight accommondations can only result in more traffic.

Topic Question 4: As with all the ideas above moving employees from the Valley only to have them commute to work each day makes little sense. If we want the guest experience to be the best it can be we need employees who are refreshed and available when needed, not employees who have to start their day with the negative experience of a congested commute every day.

Topic Question 5: The less disruption in the status quo the better. Still believe we can keep more camping available while limiting the impact on the river.

Topic Question 6: We certainly can only expect more demand as populations increase. We should be planing for this increase while developing plans to limit the impact and restore the river corridor. This alternative makes the most sense in my opinion.

Comments: We need to preserve our natural wonders of which Yosemite and the Merced River are certainly included, but in doing so we need to continue to ensure that they are accessable by public to the greatest extend possible.

Correspondence ID: 84 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 10:53:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes.

Topic Question 2: Alternative Concept 1 is too restrictive and grossly restricts access to one of the nations national treasures.

Topic Question 3: Alternative Concept 2 is too restrictive and grossly restricts access to one of the nations national treasures.

Topic Question 4: Alternative Concept 3 is an improvement from Concepts 1 and 2, but falls well short of what is actually needed to keep Yosemite, 'Yosemite'.

Topic Question 5: Alternative Concept 4 is further in the right direction, but just as Concept 3 did, it too falls short of the development that's needed to enable our national treasure to advance with the growth of our National Park users.

Topic Question 6: This is the only true alternative that will allow for the continual growth and development of Yosemite

National Park for annual park visitors such as myself.

Topic Question 7: Alternative Concept 5 is clearly the best choice because it will allow for not only increased access to the nation?s most inspiring national park, but will restore the number of available campsites similar to the number that were available before the flood of 1997. My family and extended family have been camping in Yosemite National Park (Lower Pines mostly) each summer for the past 23 years. While growth is inevitable, continuing to adjust and adapt is mandatory. Increasing the number of available camp sites to the numbers of the pre-flood era will allow for countless others to enjoy the wonders of Yosemite National Park as I have for so many years now. Now I'd like to share not only my fond memories of camping in Yosemite, but allow my children the opportunity to build their own. Alternative Concept 5 allows for the advancement and growth of Yosemite National Park in a way that will allow for continued use and enjoyment for years to come.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 85 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: The tunnels or overpasses at Camp 6 and teh falls are welcome and a great idea.

The El Cap Meadow is a place where people have historically sat on the grass and enjoyed the view. Boardwalks aren't an acceptable alternative to that. The grass grows back every year and the environment isin't heavily affected so why build boardwalks which permanently destroy the grass they cover?

A parking lot at El Cap crossover would create a much greater environmental impact and adversely affect the experience of Climbers on El Cap and Cathedral with the veiw disrupted and many car alarms going off. This parking lot might only make sense in tandem with the very unwelcome plan to put a multi-lane traffic check-point at the crossover with day use shuttles from satellite parking lots. The economy and budget will not support this in the foreseeable future. I think it solves little and creates great hassle for everybody but if NPS insists on it, it should all happen at once. There are plenty of parking areas which could be created in old campgrounds or former employee housing areas like the annex where impact and civilization are already concentrated. There is too much of a trend of large areas of the impacted valley just becoming zones of wasteland and construction material storage and staging areas.

Reducing the Wawona campground? Why must NPS continually reduce camping? The last resort of the low income and the true close to nature experience? There is a conflict of interest when the NPS gets much more as a direct percentage of Concession revenue and reduces inexpensive options while retaining the most expensive accomodations. Having Campgrounds in 100 year flood plains is not a problem as the infrastructure of tables and fire pits can handle being inundated. Its better for people to stay in the valley than come in via cars each day from El Portal hotels.

Eliminating pull-outs is very bad for climbers. It is a limited view of visitation. And bad for the environment as it concentrates impact around the shuttle stops (which will have fences around them everywhere so a Yosemite visit becomes completely paved or boardwalked under your feet).

The impacts as they are now are acceptable. The compacting of a little earth around pullouts from people's use is insignificant relative to the scale of a park the size of Rhode Island. It's only an issue for peoples visual perspective and if they can't pull over to explore those areas, the visual pristine quality would be irrelevant anyway. The current trend of roping and fencing off areas of meadow and river to keep people from actually being IN nature rather than observing it from behind barriers is unforutnate. It significantly reduces visitor experience, concentrates visitors into areas which are then perceived as crowded, and visitors who insist on being in a natural place just create new impacts in areas that are not yet fenced.

Day use permits may be an acceptable solution on those FEW days when visitation is so excessive as to create real problems.

The Ice Rink is a historical use in the park and it's location is used by Rafting in the summer anyway. The Stables are also a historical use but I'd support their removal as I feel excrement on the trails severely impacts the experience of hikers and contributes to environmentla impacts as well. Thanks for you consideration.

Correspondence ID: 86 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Sierra Club Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 11:09:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: SIERRA CLUB COMMENTS ON MERCED WILD AND SCENIC RIVER PLAN PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

The Sierra Club commends the Park Service for proposing a wide range of alternatives for the Merced Wild and Scenic Plan. The Sierra Club supports all of the actions in all the alternatives to improve River values on pages 8 thru 11 of the Workbook. The Sierra Club will not support any alternative that increases the overall Peak Daily Use in Yosemite Valley, which on peak days is already overcrowded, and questions whether any increase can comply with statutory user capacity requirements. The Sierra Club also supports: Major increases in mass transit, both by expansion in the Valley and by more transit from the outlying

communities designed to bring in many more of the users who currently drive their personal vehicles. Removing as many man-made structures as possible that are causing significant impact on the natural setting of the Wild and Scenic River and the Valley and whose services are not essential to the park or can be provided through other facilities. A Day Use Reservation System for the summer peak use periods, which includes defined parking limits in East Valley. Some increase in camping from the present 470 sites, including walk in and group sites, but not in the flood plain (former Rivers campground). Keeping some housekeeping as far from the River as possible because it is low cost place to stay. Not removing the entire Merced High Sierra Camp because the future of the High Sierra Camps should be considered together, probably in the Wilderness plan.

Correspondence ID: 87 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 11:43:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The stated goals never clearly define the importance of creating access and educational opportunities for visitors and, by default, focus almost entirely on preservation. As a result, 3 of the 5 concepts dramatically reduce visitor access, one somewhat preserves the status quo, and only alternative 5 considers increased access. The range of concepts seems pre-disposed to the idea that "fewer visitors is better."

Topic Question 2: This alternative is draconian as it contemplates a Yosemite with limited access that likely will end up only being available to "locals" and others of influence who can access the required permits to enter the park. This option ignores NPS's Second Century Vision that "the National Park Service must recommit to the exemplary stewardship and public enjoyment of these places" ("A Call To Action" p.5). Concept 1 focuses solely on stewardship without regard for public access.

Topic Question 3: This alternative suffers from the same "this is my park - you stay out" as alternative concept 1.

Topic Question 4: While it can be argued that overnight usage in this scenario remains relatively consistent with today's numbers, the shift from overnight lodging options to heavier reliance on camping doesn't make sense to me. Perhaps I'm wrong, but it would seem to me that camping takes a heavier toll on the land than the use of a few lodging facilities. Further, lodging facilities are significantly less succeptible to the influences of weather. While I do enjoy camping, there are certain times of the year that it is simply not a viable option because of weather. Concept 3 also significantly reduces peak day visitor use, which again focuses on "fewer visitors is better," which I believe is misguided.

Topic Question 5: Obviously, this option is closest to keeping the status quo and may end up being the "safe compromise" for those who are trying to restrict access to Yosemite versus those who want improved services and create a better visitation experience.

Topic Question 6: This is the best option for a park that needs additional parking, lodging, and services for a public that it serves that is demanding a better visitation experience.

Topic Question 7: More parking, more lodging units, and more camping sites to accommodate a growing population and improve the visitation experience.

Topic Question 8: The concept of moving employee housing to El Portal will create increased commuting needs which appears contradictory to the concept of minimizing impact on an already burdened transit system and congested roadways. If moving the concessioner offices and some/alot of the employee housing to El Portal is a good thing, why is there not consideration of doing the same with NPS offices and employee housing?

Comments: On a side note: as a tax payer, I am appalled at wasted resources (cabins) in the rock fall zone of Curry Village. These units could be moved to another location and put into service for guests wanting accommodations in Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 88 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Waller Farms Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 11:54:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have visited Yosemite for 6 decades, my father learned to ski at Badger Pass in the late 1930's. We used to camp at Lake Tenaya for several weeks every summer, Carl Sharsmith was the ranger who led our campfire talks. I consider childhood Yosemite experiences as a major influence on my life.

Horses and pack stock are an integral part of my, and perhaps millions of others Yosemite experiences. Horses, and mules are a major historical component of Yosemite National Park.

As a small child watching the pack strings go by on wilderness trails was thrilling. It was my child hood goal to be a packer and Forest Ranger. I became a Forest Ranger, but, many decades went by before my worn out body brought me back to horses and pack animals.

At this time in my life my ability to travel in and enjoy the Yosemite landscape requires a horse and mule. I am not the lone ranger here. Many Americans for reasons of physical ability or inexperience, age or youth who wish to enjoy Yosemite require

horse and mule.

Keeping the visitor experiences, the historical uses and the pragmatic needs of the park requires that horses and pack stock remain a part of the park.

Whatever use parameters the Park comes to. Please insure that visitor use is not adversely impacted by banning horse travel.

Thank you

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 89 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 12:15:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Restoration of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp ? Proposal to restore Merced Lake High Sierra Camp would effectively prevent persons with limitations due to age (e.g., children and elderly), physical impairments (e.g., conditions which preclude carrying camping equipment), or financial resources (e.g., persons unable to hire pack mules) from enjoying the wilderness experience that the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp currently provides.

Day-use Capacity ? Day-use permit proposal would severely impair day use of wilderness trails accessed from Yosemite Valley (e.g., Yosemite Falls Trail, Four-Mile Trail, Snow Creek Trail) even though such day users have minimal impact on congestion in Yosemite Valley.

Topic Question 3: Restoration of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp ? Proposal to restore Merced Lake High Sierra Camp would effectively prevent persons with limitations due to age (e.g., children and elderly), physical impairments (e.g., conditions which preclude carrying camping equipment), or financial resources (e.g., persons unable to hire pack mules) from enjoying the wilderness experience that the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp currently provides.

Day-use Capacity ? Day-use permit proposal would severely impair day use of wilderness trails accessed from Yosemite Valley (e.g., Yosemite Falls Trail, Four-Mile Trail, Snow Creek Trail) even though such day users have minimal impact on congestion in Yosemite Valley.

Topic Question 6: Human population will continue to increase. All of the world?s resources ? including Yosemite National Park ? need to accommodate the population increase in a manner compatible with the very goals of the Merced River Plan. To do otherwise is to figuratively stick one?s head in the sand and deny the inevitable. Reasonably planned growth is the only sensible alternative.

It is possible to allow for increase in peak visitor use levels without necessarily increasing camping and lodging use. Increasing day-use facilities and commercial services should be considered.

Topic Question 7: Alternative Concept 5. (See response to Question 6.)

Topic Question 8: New concerns are raised by the proposed restoration of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp and limitation of day use opportunities as described in Alternative Concepts 1 and 2. Implementation of either of those proposals would seriously impair the ability of persons with physical or financial limitations from enjoying the wilderness experience, while favoring an elite class of super-fit or high-wealth individuals who may enjoy wilderness experiences denied to others.

Topic Question 9: Limitation of Tour Buses ? Tour buses add to the congestion in Yosemite Valley and overwhelm its facilities by bringing in concentrated numbers of persons who utilize Valley resources en masse and do not depart the Valley for wilderness areas.

Limitation or Elimination of Commercial Group Use ? Conventions, meetings, and other functions bring large numbers of people into the Valley for purposes not necessarily associated with the stated goals of the plan.

Limitation or Elimination of Non-commercial Group Use ? Weddings, anniversary celebrations, educational programs, religious gatherings, and other non-commercial group activities bring large numbers of people into the Valley for purposes not necessarily associated with the stated goals of the plan.

Increase of Day-Use Facilities ? It is possible to allow for increase in peak visitor use levels without necessarily increasing camping and lodging use. Increasing day-use facilities, including commercial services, should be considered.

Comments: A. PROPOSAL FOR RESTORATION OF MERCED LAKE HIGH SIERRA CAMP:

The following is a letter I emailed to Superintendent Neubacher on March 2, 2011 addressing my concerns about various proposals to elimintate the High Sierra Camps:

Mr. Don Neubacher Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

Over the last ten years, I have hiked most of the trails in Yosemite ? almost always solo or with my wife. Generally, my hikes have been limited to day hiking, because my aging knees make it increasingly more difficult for me to carry a heavy backpack. I frequently use the High Sierra Camps as a base because they enable me to expand the areas of Yosemite that I can cover in a day hike. Without that advantage, much of Yosemite would be inaccessible to me.

For that reason, I was concerned to learn that some persons are advocating closure of one or more of the High Sierra Camps. Being passionate about Yosemite, I want to share the experience with others, so I find it difficult to understand why anybody would deny me the wilderness experience by advocating closure of any of the High Sierra Camps.

I would observe that most of the High Sierra Camp guests appear to be over 50 years of age; many are in their 70's, and I've met some in their 80's. I suspect that I'm not the only one whose knees or other physical condition preclude carrying a heavy backpack, and who would be deprived of wilderness access if any of the High Sierra Camps were to be closed.

But not all High Sierra Camp guests are elderly. For many parents and grandparents the high camps are the perfect way to introduce children to the joys of the wilderness. Indeed, many of those parents and grandparents were introduced into the wilderness by their ancestors through the high camps. What better way to pass down the stewardship of Yosemite's treasures to future generations? Two years ago, my wife and I spent two nights at the May Lake High Sierra Camp with our 13-year old grandson from Dallas, climbing Mt. Hoffman and visiting Raisin Lake. It was his first exposure to the wilderness, and something we could not have done with him if we had to backpack and camp. We are looking forward to introducing our granddaughters to similar experiences when they get older.

I understand that there have been some complaints about the impact from mules delivering supplies to the high camps. Mule impact is a red herring. It is unlikely that wildlife cares about mules. Any inconvenience caused to a hiker encountering a high-camp supply train is short-lived (and probably disingenuous); in any event, it is a small price to pay for sharing the park's treasures. Mule-caused damage to trails is real, but can be repaired. I have no doubt that a large part of the success of the Yosemite Conservancy's "Campaign for Yosemite Trails" is attributable to participation from those who have stayed at the High Sierra Camps. I am confident in making that statement because guests I have met at the high camps are as passionate about Yosemite as I am.

Sewage issues are a concern. Although addressing high camp sewage issues may be expensive relative to the numbers who enjoy the high camps, the park must address them rationally and responsibly. Closure of any of the high camps due to cost of sewage treatment is literally throwing the baby out with the bath water. Special use issues are always disproportionately expensive ? whether they be providing handicapped facilities, preserving historical artifacts, or maintaining search and rescue capacity. They are expenses that go to the very heart and soul of our national park system.

The occupancy rate of the High Sierra Camps attests to the fact that they are among Yosemite's treasures which must be preserved. The question to be addressed should not be whether to retain any of the High Sierra Camps, but rather how to retain them in a cost effective and environmentally friendly manner. I hope that you will support maintaining the High Sierra Camps.

Sent by email to Superintendent Neubacher on March 2, 2011, 3:20 pm.

B. PROPOSAL FOR REQUIRING DAY-USE PERMITS

Although I now live in St. George, Utah, for the previous 40 years I lived in Fresno. During the last 15 years I have hiked in Yosemite National Park almost every weekend between early spring and late winter. I typically average between 750 and 1,000 trail miles each year. I can honestly say that my activities have had zero impact on the Merced River corridor.

Imposing a requirement of day-use permits and/or reservations for hiking would seriously impair my favorite activity.

My favorite hiking route is the Four Mile Trail/Panorama Trail/John Muir Trail loop, including walking through the Valley to wherever my car may be parked. I typically walk that route 10 - 15 times a year.

In May, 2010, for the first time ever, I experienced great physical difficulty ascending the Four Mile Trail. The difficulty increase each successive week; soon, it became apparent that I could no longer ascend the trail. That led to a diagnosis of a

faulty heart valve, which was repaired by open-heart surgery in August, 2010.

The day before the surgery, I did an 8-mile walk on the beach at Monterey without any difficulty. My strong heart was able to compensate for easy activities, but not for strenuous ones. The defect would not have been discovered but for the strenuous climb of the Four Mile Trail. Had the defect not been discovered, it would have resulted in an enlarged heart and ultimately congestive heart disease. The Four Mile Trail saved my life.

It is interesting to contemplate what the result would have been if my ability to hike Yosemite's trails had been limited by a day-use permit or reservation requirement.

With my heart repaired, I am now back to hiking as I did before. As I now reside in Utah, most of my hiking is in the red rock areas of southern Utah and Zion National Park. I still return to Yosemite several times a year to hike its trails. Implementation of a day-use permit or reservation system would impair my ability to return to the trail which saved my life.

Correspondence ID: 90 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite Entertainment Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 12:24:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 7: I prefer Alternatives 4 and 5. As a long time mountain resident and lover of Yosemite. My family's favorite way to view Half Dome & Yosemite Falls is by floating down the Merced on a sunny afternoon. To require a permit of any kind, would be the beginning of the end for folks like myself, who moved to this area to enjoy such a treat. Look what happened to Half Dome when you change to the permit system. The permits sell out in 4 minutes or less and 50% of the permits bought weren't even used last summer (only 200 of the 400 permits purchased for each day were used). I guess the people who bought them to sell, couldn't scalp them on craigslist (like they could in the past) for $100. a piece. Same thing happened with campsites. Opportunists buy up the reservations in order to make a profit and people who have been going to Yosemite (for the same week every year) no longer can get a campsite. I don't know who's coming up with these great ideas but I wish they'd stop. I was part of the gateway partners for a couple years and I got know Mike Tollefson pretty well. I once asked him, if there was any chance the NPS would ever eliminate rafting from the valley? He said not to worry, that it's a historical part the Yosemite experience. I hope he's right.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 91 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Has the NPS captured a wide range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? Yes, there is a wide range of alternatives. I would still like to see legislation to remove the Yosemite Valley segment from the Merced River Wild and Scenic Rivers designation.

-Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Yes, these alternatives address the stated goals. However, the raod patterns within the Valley have not been discussed. Several intersections are real roadblocks when visitation is high. Specifically, the Camp 6/Concessioner Office/garage complex, the Yosemite Lodge/Yosemite Falls intersection just west of the bridge, and the Cmap Curry/Northside/Southside interesection.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 1 I see little in this alternative concept that appeals to me. I do like the idea of protection of the El Portal Valley oaks. The negative aspects include the high-density housing fro 250 employees in the Abbieville & trailer park; the converting the Yosemite Lodge area to day use; the removal of 270 units of Housekeeping Camp; the restrictions on paddling the Merced River, the removal of 220 spaces in Curry Orchard parking, the reduction in lodging at Curry Village retaining only 358 units; the removal of 80 camp sites in North Pines; the removal of the bridges and the removal and restoration of the stables and Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 2 The positive aspects of this alternative include: the new camping development of 40 RV sites; Stoneman Meadow restoration with removal of Southside Drive and realignment through Boys Town; the limited Abbieville and Trailer Village housing of 30 employees, and the Camp Curry reduction in cabins and tents for a total of 440 units.

The negative aspects include: moving the Concessioner Gernal Office; the removal of 4 buildings at the Yosemite Lodge, retaining only 140 untis; the restoration and removal of 270 units in Housekeeping Camp; the restrictions on paddling; the removal of 220 spaces in the Curry Orchard Parking; the removal of cabins and tents at Camp Curry for a total of 440 units; the removal of brdiges; and the restoration of the stables and Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 3 The positive aspects include: the concept of restoring the Greenmeyers sandpit thru natural flooding; the Camp 6 restoration and relocation of parking spaces for 750 day-use visitors; the 110 new camp sites in Upper and Lower River campgrounds; the restoration of Stoneman Meadow; the Camp Curry reduction in cabins and tents for a total of 440 units; and the additional 40 RV and 60 walk-in camp sites.

The negative aspects of Concept 3 included: the large relcoation of housing to the Abbieville and Trailer Village; the restoration

and removal of 180 units in Housekeeping Camp; the removal of the Concessioner General Office to El Portal; the removal of bridges; and the re-development of the stables and conversion of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 4 The positive aspects of Concept 4 are many. The Operations plan; the El Portal oaks enhancement; The West Valley Day Use Overflow Parking of 250 spaces with expanded shuttle service; a parking area west of Yosemite Lodge to provide 150 day-use spaces; the El Capitan meadow restoration; the restoration and relocating of parking in Camp 6 for a total of 750 spaces; the parking area west of Yosemite Lodge to provide 150 day use spaces; the restoration of Housekeeping Camp retaining a total of 230 units; the additional picnicking opportunities; the restoration of Camp Curry for a total of 420 units; the restoration of the riparioan zone; the development of 200 spaces for visitor parking in the El Portal area; and the additional 40 RV and 60 walk-in camp sites.

The negative aspects of Concept 4 are: the large development of housing in the Abbieville and Trailer Village.

-Feedback on Concept 5 The positive aspects of Concept 5 are: El Portal Valley oaks enhancement; Valley Day-Use parking area developed in teh West Valley to provide 500 overflow spaces; El Capitan Meadow restoration; a new campground developed east of El Capitan Picnic area for 80 car and RV sites; a re-design to provide 150 additional parking spaces; the retention of 266 units at the Housekeeping Camp; the 190 new camping sites within UPper and Lower PInes campgrounds; the Curry Village remodel retaining 460 units; the restoration of the riparian zone; and the additional 40 RV and 60 walk-in camp sites.

The negative aspects of Concept 5 are: The Abbieville & Trailer village development of housing to accomodate 400 employees.

Correspondence ID: 92 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 13:06:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I would like more information on the upgrades to the Curry Stabling area.

Topic Question 2: I am NOT in favor of this proposal at all. I do not want day rides elimated from the stabling area.

Topic Question 8: The elimination of pack and saddle stock and day rides in Proposal #2

Comments: I want to express my concern about any changes to the current recreational use of Yosemite National Park by stock users and commercial stock organizations that operate stock operations within the Park. I believe that stock use is one of the most enjoyable activities that visitors to the Park can achieve, as the experience of riding a horse or a mule in the great west of the United States by visitors from all around the world. Those who discovered this land and imagined the establishment of a Park were transported through this beautiful area by horse or mule. The Park was built with the help of these animals. Stock use in the Park is a very historic activity that should never be denied or restricted. I ask that no action be taken to change the current activities of stock use in the Park as it would have a highly negative effect on the public's ability to enjoy the Park to its fullest.

Correspondence ID: 93 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 13:31:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Proposal #1 suggests major upgrades at the Curry Village stables. The other proposals don't mention and changes to the stabling area. This would be an acceptable proposal.

Topic Question 3: Proposal #2 is not acceptable as it suggests eliminating the stables. The stables provide a unique opportuntiy to experience Yosemite and provides access to people who do not have the ability to hike.

Comments: Balance and sustainability are two thoughts that come to my mind. Also, access to public lands for the people to enjoy without destroying.

I'm so concerned about elitests trying to eliminate equestrians from the backcountry. We understand the need to protect and we, as Backcountry Horsemen teach and practice good stewardship.

Correspondence ID: 94 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: no comment

Topic Question 2: seems too severe, particularly lodging reduction. Seems like that would automatically drive increased day use pressure.

Topic Question 3: moving concessioner office out of valley would negatively impact abiity to move quickly or informally on administrative matters, would add turn around time for document flow, necessitate additional motor vehicle trips between the valley and El Portal to conduct business.

Topic Question 4: I like the idea of real time traffic information and differential pricing. I am concerned about additional impervious coverage in riparian areas (proposed El Portal parking) to create a new parking lot. Better use of existing coverage at the utility plant, Yosemite View, Cedar Lodge, Midpines County Park, et al. in an expanded higher frequency Park and Ride type operation would get my vote.

Topic Question 5: Lodging reduction in most snow melt flood prone areas of Curry Village and Housekeeping seems the most reasonable reduction. The campsite reduction seems the most palatable of all five.

Topic Question 6: sometimes no decision is a decision

Topic Question 7: noted above

Topic Question 8: removing concessioner administration and employees out of the valley will necessarly result in higher operating costs for concessioner, additional fuel costs for employees, increased vehicle trips overall. Reduction in the overall number of valley beds will negatively impact guest services due to a smaller, more remote workforce, impose economic hardship and ungodly commute times for employees competing for very limited housing options in surrounding communities.

Topic Question 9: Discourage single passenger vehicle trips with preferential entrance fees and preferred parking spots, other perquisites reserved for vehicles admitted with multiple passengers.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 95 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? No. The reduction of services in Alternatives 1-3 do not appear reasonable or feasible to providing public recreation. Access to Yosemite should be managed, but not restricted.

-Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? No. Only 2 of the alternativves (#4,5) contain visitor based logic. Since the 1980 GMP, parking, camping, and overnight accomodations have already been significantly reduced at the expence of the annual visitor.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 1 Not feasible.

-Feedback on Alternaive Concept 2 Not feasible.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 3 Not feasible.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 4 Consistent with Yosemite GMP

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 5 Allows for replacement of lost facilities and accomodations in the Valley since the 1997 flood and 2008 Rockfall.

-Are there other resonable alternatives that should be considered? Alternative #5 is a good start in servicing th annual visitation and off-setting the impacts over the past 20 years.

Correspondence ID: 96 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Please Please Please Vote NO on Prop 2 ! we love our rides in the village. Thank You Very Much

Topic Question 2: I support Prop 1 upgrades to the village. Thanks so much

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 97 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Who does Yosemite belong to????? The rich white elite environmentalists or the people. Noted that all the facilities that have been eliminated are the facilities that the common people would and could enjoy!!!!!! The campgrounds, the lodge, and the Housekeeping camp. What about the Ahwahnee why don/t you cut back their occupancy? This is a travesty that you guys have given so much power to these jonnie come lately!!!!! Shame, shame, shame!!!!! I for one will protest these changes in any way I can and of course get as many people to join me.

In past times the Park was the only outlet that many common people had to enjoy and you are trying to take this a way.... You think the Occupiers and the Tea Party can make noise..... Well so can WE. The more I write the angrier I get. This is not YOUR Park this is OUR Park!!!!!!

Born and Reared in Yosemite Mariposa County Resident [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 98 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: From: Long time visitor to Yosemite; Owner, Marble Quarry RV Park, Columbia.

I attended the workshop and walk in Yosemite Valley and the workshop at Groveland on 18 April, 2012. I would like to make the following comments:

First, I feel that a Yosemite Valley day use entry reservation system, as discussed in Alternatives 1 and 2, would not work. A person at an entry check station could not discern the difference between a day use person (needing a permit) and a person passing through the park, or going to a part of the park other than the East Valley. The West Valley Loop is a State Highway, upon which traffic flow cannot be restricted.

To give citations to unauthorized parking in the East Valley would be difficult and costly. Persons traveling from Eastern Seaboard locations or international destinations would be shocked, upon arrival, to learn that they could not enter the East Valley. So, let's scrap Alternatives 1 and 2.

Second, the new parking at the El Capitan Crossover is commendable, and workable. A comfort station and shuttle bus stop would be an excellent concept. In addition, I would recommend an information booth adjacent to the bus stop, to help guide visitors with the options available to them, and inform them of available parking in the various East Valley day use lots. The use of roundabouts and pedestrian underpasses in the East Valley will facilitate an easier traffic flow for those who choose to enter the East Valley, although the West Valley day use parking will probably relieve congestion even further.

Picnics should be allowed near the West Valley day use parking to further reduce impact on the river corridor in the East Valley. I believe that the public might be able to view climbers on El Capitan from these picnic areas, which would reduce the impact on El Capitan Meadows. With these additional recreational uses, and the use of a West Valley shuttle bus system, the maximum number of parking spaces should be considered, even if they need to be developed in phases over several years.

Third, the traveling public should be allowed to enjoy the maximum number of camping spaces possible. Some of them could be walk-in sites. Alternative 5 seems to best meet this need. Fourth, certain recreational activities, such ice skating, rock climbing and river rafting, may still need to be limited by use permits. These permits could be issued either on-line, near entrance stations, at the Visitors Center, or at the information booth at the El Capitan Crossover. Computers linked to a common website would be easy to do. We do this with reservations at Marble Quarry RV Park, in Columbia, and would be happy to share how it is done. www.marblequarry.com Fifth, an alternative to the costly removal of the two bridges on the registry of historic places, could be to excavate a shallow channel (about 40' wide by 2' deep) slightly to the South of the berm between the two bridges. This would follow the same concept as the Yolo Bypass, which prevents flooding of downtown Sacramento, during high flows on the Sacramento River; or a spill way at most dams (which the bridges are now acting as, during flood periods). Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the planning process. You have been must gracious during the workshops. Good luck!

Correspondence ID: 99 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: After reviewing the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook, and participating in the March 27th Webinar and March 28th Workshop, I am declining your request to advocate in support of any of the preliminary alternative concepts or isolated specifics therein. Deep-seated concerns about the inadequacy of the Draft ORV Baseline Conditions Assessment Report (a critical foundational document) as well as lack of direction with respect to user capacity, lack of a transportation plan, and incomplete parking information/analysis were raised in the Plaintiffs' comment letter of June 1 and my comment letter of December 12, 2011'concerns which have yet to be addressed. I continue to stand by the concerns expressed in those letters. Consequently, absent this critical information, any comments I (or anyone else) might offer at this time concerning the Preliminary Alternative Concepts would be nothing more than an "opinion." Yosemite and its life-sustaining Merced River deserve better? Some observations

This latest round of workshops (& workbook) apparently came about because the public was very concerned about the failure to include a discussion of user capacity, transportation, and parking during the Fall workshops. Though I certainly recognize the tremendous time and effort (& money) invested in the workbook as well as the workshop presentations, I still fail to understand how user capacity led to selection of the alternative concepts; there still appears to be no transportation plan; and the range of alternatives appears to be predicated on parking availability with arbitrary numbers and policies that make little sense.

Planners claim the foundational documents (i.e., scoping summary, the previously published ORV definitions/descriptions, and the Draft ORV Baseline Conditions Assessment Report) are the basis for the alternative concepts. The Draft ORV Baseline Conditions Assessment, touted as key to reasoned decision-making, has never been finalized (was originally scheduled to have been completed in summer 2011, and then moved to fall 2011, and in the latest workbook finalization is not even mentioned anymore). An entire rewrite of the critical Recreation chapter has been planned for quite some time but apparently will not be available in time for this comment period--and yet it is the type and amount of recreation that is at stake here. With respect to the Biological chapter, it states the meadows and riparian section "will be updated once the forthcoming NPS condition assessment reports become available;" that "the overall Biological ORV conditions in Yosemite Valley since 1987 are difficult to assess due to the scarcity and limitations of available data, but the trend appears to be positive." So if park "experts" admit scarcity and limitations of data, how is informed decision-making taking place? Of particular concern is that potentially permanent site-specific management options restricting (or siting) visitor facilities/access are being proposed (i.e., picnic area redesign, campsite placement/displacement, etc.) that appear to be based on the assumption that visitors are causing the damage, but even the Draft Report acknowledges that "it is difficult to draw a definite link between the observed conditions and high visitor use" and that "further research is necessary before conclusions can be made."

According to the MRP website, the Resource Management and Science Division is currently conducting a "Merced River and Meadows Condition Assessment." "The purpose of this project is to prepare an up-to-date comprehensive assessment of river and riparian conditions along the Merced in Yosemite Valley, including an assessment of changes that have taken place between the time of designation (1987) and the present. This work will integrate past assessments of river function and impacts into a modern comprehensive survey of overall river condition including vegetation, large wood loading, and geomorphology." Research was projected to be completed during the Spring or Summer of 2011 (yet never released to the public and certainly not part of the Draft ORV Baseline Conditions Assessment Report); has it ever been completed? A rafting study was conducted last summer but results have never been released to the public'yet we see new rafting regulations and a permitting process introduced in all alternative concepts. An updated parking inventory was conducted last summer'not released to the public'yet the number of parking spaces appears to be the decisive issue in each of the alternatives.

So we're now given 5 preliminary alternative concepts to discuss--but with no rationale or justification, but the park presentation (at least on 3/27 and 3/28) assures us that "ALL alternatives protect and enhance river values," and that "NO ORVs are experiencing segment-wide impacts" (though that doesn't preclude the park from tinkering with specific areas they believe (arbitrarily?) are in need of attention). At the 3/28 workshop, Kathleen Morse emphasized that none of the alternatives were "straw men"--that they were all legitimate. When the question was raised as to how could planners NOT justify Alternative 5 if ALL alternatives are protective--the moderator said we were supposed to indicate what we "liked" or "disliked" about the alternatives. Choosing alternatives, or isolated specifics within alternatives, based on face value and devoid of context is no different than taking a "vote;" are management considerations being decided by "election"?? Meanwhile Kathleen stated that all the details, analysis and explanations will appear in the DEIS coming this fall--so how are we supposed to provide informed comments on what's before us right now???

My concerns are further amplified by media coverage that has focused on quotas, reduced opportunities to visit the Park (aka "locking people out"), limiting access, increased regulations, penalizing, etc.; lots of press about high demand for Half Dome permits and camping reservations resulting in scalping. In other words, rather than educating the public and bringing them along to believe that this plan is an amazing opportunity to both protect a dearly beloved place and result in a better visitor experience, lots of negative implying a loss of "freedom" has been planted. So now this latest exercise has everyone focusing (perhaps even arguing) on the specifics of suggested alternatives as a distraction from stepping back and evaluating what would be best for the River and for the visitor. Because there is little factual back-up presented, the stage is set for various interest groups to oppose one another, seeking to get what they can get, rather than everyone clearly understanding the importance of this unique planning opportunity and uniting behind the bigger picture of wanting what's best for Yosemite.

Going back to user capacity for a moment: the 1982 Guidelines' definition of "carrying capacity" states: "The quantity of recreation use which an area can sustain without adverse impact on ? the outstandingly remarkable values and free flowing character of the river area, ? the quality of the recreation experience, and ? public health and safety."

The park presentation claims "No ORVs are experiencing segment-wide impacts" and "ALL alternatives protect and enhance river values." So, with the first filter, it would seem that ALL alternatives are OK and none will have an adverse impact on the ORVs. As to the second filter, "quality of the recreation experience," little information has been presented; the Recreation Chapter of the Draft ORV Conditions Assessment Report is in disarray and recreationists have never been surveyed as to what they consider a "quality" experience upon which to base management considerations; so going back to the user capacity definition, how do we measure whether the quantity of recreation use proposed in the alternative concepts will or won't have an adverse impact on the quality of the recreation experience'especially since Recreation, in and of itself, is an ORV?? And then

there's the third filter, whether the proposed quantity of recreation use will or will not have an adverse impact on public health and safety--especially since we're talking about the numbers of people that can be safely accommodated (or evacuated) in a box canyon; such a conversation has never taken place. So I question again--where is user capacity as the basis for reasoned decision-making in the selection of the preliminary alternative concepts?

With respect to footnote 5: the subject of facilities and services appears to be a bit of a shell game. The workbook lists some facilities proposed for removal/relocation/repurposing; in the presentation a bigger list is shown, but that list only refers to removal from the river corridor. Now it appears the previous workshop list presented on 3/27 and 3/28 has since been further revised raising more questions. Though planners appear to have made some progress in proposing removal of inappropriate facilities, it would have been helpful to have a chart of those facilities that are currently in the river corridor and then show which ones are proposed for complete removal from the Valley and then those that will remain in the Valley but relocated outside the river corridor. At present it is unclear what Valley-based services are "needed" and how many employees are required to offer those services. The workbook shifts employee numbers around, but what do those numbers really represent and are all these employees even necessary?

Also, concerning footnote 5: according to the MRP website, an additional slide was added to the presentation starting with the April 4 workshop which quoted text from footnote 5. However, it left out the second half of the footnote: Although recreation is an ORV that must be protected and enhanced, see 16 U.S.C. ' 1271, to be included as an ORV, according to NPS itself, a value must be (1) river-related or river dependant, and (2) rare, unique, or exemplary in a regional or national context. The multitude of facilities and services provided at the Merced certainly do not meet the mandatory criteria for inclusion as an ORV. NPS does not explain how maintaining such a status quo in the interim would protect or enhance the river's unique values as required under the WRSA.

A previous explanation for this omission was that facilities and services in the Merced River corridor were not part of the Recreation ORV so therefore, the latter half of the footnote could be disregarded. But what is not clear is how decisions regarding those facilities and services remaining (whatever those are) are consistent with the resource-appropriate activities/services and the human-built environment described in the previously published ORV definitions/descriptions. And recognizing that there will be radiating impacts from those facilities and services deemed appropriate to be located/relocated outside the River corridor yet still remaining in the Valley, how are those decisions consistent with the resource-appropriate experiences described in the NPS Management Policies and the 1980 General Management Plan. ? NPS Management Policy 8.2, Visitor Use: "To provide for enjoyment of the parks, the National Park Service will encourage visitor activities that ? will foster an understanding of and appreciation for park resources and values, or will promote enjoyment through a direct association with, interaction with, or relation to park resources" and that "can be sustained without causing unacceptable impacts to park resources or values." (2006)

? Yosemite General Management Plan: The "Park Experience" is defined as "programs for doing, thinking, dreaming, and being in relationship with Yosemite's resources"; the "visitor experience will consist of opportunities for educational and park-related recreational pursuits such as walking and hiking, backpacking, and Merced River floating;" "activities such as picnicking, hiking, and camping, which take advantage of the park's natural features rather than man-made facilities?are the most appropriate uses?" "Space in the Valley will not be allocated for resort activities, since they are not directly related to the significant resources." "The backcountry accommodates the hiker seeking solitude, organized groups, families, and novices. It is only accessible by hiking and horseback in the summer and fall and by skiing in the spring and winter;" trailside camping is dispersed." (1980)

Though the presentation mentions four criteria for facility decision-making, the public has no idea how those criteria were applied and to which facilities/services, as well as what the trade-offs might be (e.g., land use, opportunities for visitors to self-regulate, numbers of employees and support needed/or not, impacts on transportation/parking/user capacity, etc.). In the past, plaintiffs have opposed employee housing at Abbieville since the area is within the river corridor (and the floodplain) in addition to wetland and species concerns. A review of the Draft ORV Conditions Assessment Report for Abbieville only revealed a name on a map; no mention anywhere of wetland or species concerns or river corridor or floodplain concerns so am unclear why there appear to be no "management concerns" for this area. Additionally, planners seem a bit unsure as to the commuting habits of employees living outside the park. An interesting 2000 study conducted by UC Davis analyzes this and how placement of employees in El Portal only adds to valley congestion; not to mention that when surveyed, 56% of employees admitted when they drive into the park, they park anywhere they can find a space--directly competing with day visitor parking. http://pubs.its.ucdavis.edu/publication_detail.php?id=410

It would seem that there has to be a mandatory employee shuttle and significant cooperation with DNC concerning shift assignments if employees are to be relocated outside the Valley. Any successful enterprise would inconvenience employees first before eliminating customers.

Am especially concerned how planners plan to manage the whole parking situation and its alleged correlation to day visitation and user capacity. Pay to park could be implemented in centralized lots, but would parking meters be placed in the west valley at the 687 day visitor spaces?? What about west Valley shuttle service--that's been a suggestion from the beginning?? Why no mention of small dispersed lots scattered throughout with shuttle pick up rather than a large 200-car or 500-car west Valley lot? What IS the updated parking inventory and who is using the available spaces?? In 1999 as a member of the NPS Traffic

Management Team, the very best day we had all summer parked 408 cars and 39 RVs in Camp 6; acknowledging that Camp 6 was enlarged after parking was removed from the Falls, consultants in 2003 counted 621 spaces. Jim Bacon indicated that the 800-900 spaces that are mentioned in the workbook as 'existing' were offered as an estimate by someone who worked at Camp 6. If the lot has expanded by 200-300 spaces with no approved CatEx, one would think that's a problem. But what is especially concerning is that if the baseline number is off because of an off-the-cuff estimate that has not been ground-truthed, how does that affect the existing conditions and the numbers in the alternatives? Can any of the numbers be trusted?

The "elephant in the room" hovering over the entire parking supply and transportation discussion is fear of the GMP goal/language that threatens removal of private vehicle access to Yosemite Valley. "While the National Park Service intends to remove all automobile traffic from the Valley, the immediate plan is to greatly reduce traffic there, by restricting automobile use ?and encouraging visitors to leave their automobiles at parking areas with bus service to the Valley." (page 31, 1980 GMP)

"Review of Transportation workshops which resulted in consensus that Camp 6 works well as a parking facility... Immediate dispersion, less stress on shuttle system. Reality is that buses for the next 10-15 years will be limited to diesel fuels (technology not there yet to improve them)?Also, Camp 6 enables us to pull back in phases and ultimately remove parking from the East Valley (meeting GMP goals) while bringing the public along." (May 27, 1999 Squad Meeting Minutes, Yosemite)

"Camp 6 ? would be destination hub and would be the start of the regional transportation system, introduce transit. While still looking toward the long-range goal of GMP to reduce vehicle in valley, in the meantime still need to accommodate visitor vehicle'when elimination of private vehicle is accomplished, and it is not needed for transit, then would revert back to background zone." (October 6, 1999 NPS Merced River Plan meeting and process notes'DEIS Workshop #4)

Though the workbook acknowledges the MRP will amend the GMP and "establish new guidance for public access to the river corridor and Yosemite Valley," the public has no idea what that guidance will be. But apparently it will be "dependent on the supply of parking provided in each alternative." Hence my laser focus on trying to get a definitive handle on the actual number of parking spaces, who is using Comments'Preliminary Alternative Concepts Page 6 of 6 April 19, 2012

them, how that parking (or lack thereof) impacts both participation in the resource-appropriate activities described in the Recreation ORV as well as the quality of the recreation experience, the how and why of proposed parking and transportation management strategies and their impact on the visitor experience, etc. Without that information it is impossible to offer informed comments.

The public has invested HUGE amounts of time and energy trying to support development of the best plan possible, providing pages and pages of comment letters and attending workshops. I had high hopes that if someone were to ask me which preliminary alternative concept I supported or what specifics I favored, I could point to consistency with the previously published ORV definition/description and then reinforce the management considerations discussed in the condition assessment report and their relation to user capacity and how this or that action would result in an array of positives--in other words using the foundational documents as a template'basically responding with an objective, rational, reasoned explanation. Sadly, should I be asked now, I feel my response would be nothing more than a reflection of my personal bias; I believe such a response is unacceptable.

Respectfully,

[redacted]

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 100 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Planners and Park Supervisor: It has come to my attention that there are plans to eliminate the high Sierra camp Merced. While I understand the desire to preserve the "Wilderness" it seems to me that the "Wilderness" belongs to all the people, not just the ones hearty enough to backpack into it. The High Sierra camps make it possible for anyone who can ride a horse or take a walk to enjoy the majesty of our greatest national park without the fuss and bustle typical of Glacier Point and the Valley. The camps really take up a tiny amount of the "Wilderness" and what's more they have been a Yosemite tradition for a hundred years or more. I am an avid backpacker, but the day is coming when I can no longer shoulder the pack needed to hike the trails too far for a day trip, and I look forward to hiking to the High Sierra Camps into my 90s and who knows maybe even beyond.

Please visit and enjoy these camps for yourselves before making any final decisions. And please keep these camps for us.

Correspondence ID: 101 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 14:31:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes. Some alternatives are far more aggressive in concept than others, however.

Topic Question 2: Reducing the vehicle parking footprint is a great idea, however, reducing visitor numbers seems a bit aggressive.

Topic Question 3: Though not as severe in cut backs it is still reducing visitor numbers. Would think that could have an adverse effect on revenue and on going projects.

Topic Question 4: Moving some of the operating functions outside the park would be a great idea. This concept seems to consider visitor vs operations in a more positive light.

Topic Question 5: The incease in use levels is a positive attribute, however, it would be nice to consider alternatives for the vehicle access issue. Parking facilities outside the park and increased shuttle services would really improve the visitor experience.

Topic Question 6: Love the visitor numbers here but still have a negative feel for the shere number of vehicles allowed to enter the Valley. Would think some of the conservation issues could be compromised.

Topic Question 7: It's pretty obvious I like visitor access, but reduce the Valley congestion would be a significant improvement. Reducing Valley vehicle access and increasing the shuttle service would be preferred.

Topic Question 8: Just the limited visitor numbers. It would be so very unfortunate to make this beautiful place unavailable for so many who wish to see and experience it.

Topic Question 9: Would a rail system be considered a viable alternative vs increased shuttle units?

Comments: Thank you so much for allowing me an opportunity to comment. I participated in your webinar presentation on April 11th. Our local paper, the Los Banos Enterprise, had an editorial incouraging people to get involved. They provided an internet URL address for your site. Look forward to hearing how you are progressing. I signed up and currently on your email list. Thank You!

Correspondence ID: 102 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Access Fund Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: RE: Access Fund Comments to the Merced Wild and Scenic River Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook Dear Yosemite Planning Team: The Access Fund welcomes the opportunity to submit these comments to the National Park Service's (NPS) Merced Wild and Scenic River Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook ("Concepts Workbook"). We provide these comments to better inform Yosemite National Park (YNP) planners and help focus and refine planning alternatives for the Merced River Plan ("MRP" or "the Plan"). These comments are provided in addition to the scoping comments we submitted in 2010[i] and comments to the initial MRP Planning Workbook in 2011.[ii] The Access Fund applauds the work that Yosemite planners put into the latest iteration of the MRP Workbook, as well as the many opportunities provided for public involvement. The Access Fund The Access Fund is the only national advocacy organization whose mission is to keep climbing areas open and conserve the climbing environment. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit supporting and representing over 2.3 million climbers nationwide in all forms of climbing'rock climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, and bouldering. The Access Fund is the largest US climbing organization, with over 15,000 members and affiliates. California is our largest member state, and Access Fund members across the country regularly travel to Yosemite to climb at this world-class destination. The Access Fund has a long history of participation in Yosemite National Park management initiatives,[iii] and we welcome this additional opportunity to participate in the development of the MRP planning alternatives. COMMENTS The Access Fund has the following suggestions to improve the preliminary alternative concepts presented in the MRP Concepts Workbook. In general we support the direction reflected in Alternative Concept 3 (Resource-based Experiences and Targeted Riverbank Restoration), however we think some elements in the other alternative concepts would improve Alternative 3. We also support many of the actions common to all alternatives such as the removal of resort amenities and excessive lodging; however, concerns remain regarding site specific elements at locations like El Capitan Meadow, and there are key omissions in the Concepts Workbook that should be added to this plan such as improvements to Camp 4. Also, we think the relationship between the MRP and the 1980 General Management Plan needs to be clarified. I. The MRP Should Provide More Camping and Remove Developed Lodging The Access Fund urges Park planners to refine these MRP Concepts to phase out developed lodging and provide more camping. Providing more camping in the Park, and limiting lodging in the Park to rustic/primitive accommodations, supports the Recreation Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) recognized in the Plan for the Valley Segment. Lodging, by contrast, is a form of leisure which is not recognized as an ORV in the MRP or the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Improving the camping/lodging ratio is also consistent with the NPS's own management policies which encourage forms of recreation that promote a direct relationship to Park resources. To wit, Appropriate visitor enjoyment is often associated with the inspirational qualities of the parks. As a general matter, preferred forms of enjoyment are those that are uniquely suited to the superlative natural and cultural resources found in the parks and that (1) foster an understanding of and appreciation for park resources and values, or (2) promote enjoyment through a direct association with, interaction with, or relation to park resources (emphasis added).[iv] Improving the camping/lodging ratio would also be more consistent with the character of Yosemite as a national park, as opposed to the luxury resort or amusement park that Yosemite often resembles. Yosemite planners should recognize that the Park made the decision to locate developed lodgings in prime upland sites, giving priority to lodging rather than camping, and thus relegating camping and rustic lodging to sites with flood plain and riparian issues. The burden of correcting this

inappropriate imbalance and restoring the ratio of overnight accommodations in the Valley should fall on lodging, not camping. Moreover, removing lodging in the Valley and increasing campsites compensates for the loss of hundreds of campsites from the Valley and outside the park over the last two decades, and reflects the fact that hundreds of new lodging units have been built at El Portal and other gateway communities during that time, creating a huge net imbalance between camping and lodging opportunities in the Greater Yosemite area. This imbalance can only be rectified by creating new campsites in the Valley and decommissioning lodging. The MRP should restore as much camping as possible to sites that have already been disturbed such as the Rivers Campgrounds and the Pine and Oak lodging units at Yosemite Lodge that were damaged in the 1997 flood. These areas in particular could be engineered with the recognition that they will again be flooded.[v] In providing more campsites, the MRP should also expand the range of camping opportunities to include group campsites, walk-in and walk-to campsites (all three of which can be much more space efficient than conventional sites and allow sites to be located in flood plain areas, with parking and toilets outside the floodplain), and designated RV sites with hookups to limit the number of RVs in campgrounds and avoid the need for noisy generators that negatively impact the experiences of campers. Provision should explicitly be made for backpackers and visitors who arrive in the Park without a vehicle. The Access Fund does not support developing a campground east of the El Cap picnic area, as proposed in Alternative 5, since this area is relatively undisturbed and would bring new infrastructure and service needs to the west end of the Valley. II. Planners Should Base the Preferred Alternative on Alternative Concept 3 Concept 3'Resource-based Visitor Experiences and Targeted Riverbank Restoration Preliminary'would accommodate slightly lower peak visitor-use levels than today, with reduced commercial services but large increases over current camping opportunities. The Access Fund supports using a modified Alternative Concept 3 for the Preferred Alternative because this concept provides the most realistic framework for protecting ORVs and increasing camping opportunities in accordance with NPS polices. Concept 3 best aligns with NPS policy to bring Park visitors in close association with Park resources in that it reduces lodging by 210 units (17%) throughout the corridor while increasing camping by 230 sites (41%) throughout the planning area. While Concept 5 would add more campsites, Concept 5 would also increase lodging units in the planning area and increase peak visitor use levels. Concept 3 would also restore significant riparian and floodplain acreage. We also support the modest reductions in total visitor use in Concept 3, but with a real-time traffic information system and traffic diversions during peak use periods, including a differential fee for parking and a congestion pricing scheme. The Access Fund also supports Alternative 3's reduction in lodging and the transfer of this overnight visitor use capacity to 220 new net campsites throughout the Valley. We support moving hundreds of parking spaces and administrative infrastructure to El Portal and improving the transportation system through the planning area and the Park generally.[vi] The Access Fund also supports the following specific actions in Alternative Concept 3: Camping 7 Developing a new campground with 40 sites west of Yosemite Lodge. 7 Developing a new campground with 110 drive-in sites developed at the former Upper and Lower Rivers Campground area with sites to be located outside of the 10-year floodplain. Park planners should consider designating additional areas for group camping in the previously developed floodplain areas, since this allows for concentrated and highly efficient camping with minimal additional infrastructure. 7 Expanding Camp 4 eastward to provide an additional 16 walk-in sites. 7 Redeveloping the Concessioner Stables area as a new campground with 40 drive-in sites. 7 Adding a recreational vehicle campground loop with 40 RV sites and the addition of walk-in campground with 60 sites at Upper Pines. Lodging 7 Reducing lodging at Curry Village in the rockfall zone and removing tent cabins at Boys Town for road realignment. Parking 7 Restoring the riparian area at Camp 6 and relocating the parking northward away from the river for a total of 750 day-use parking spaces (and nearby transit options). We also support incorporating into Alternative 3 the following specific actions from other Preliminary Alternative Concepts: Camping 7 Redevelopment of the former Upper and Lower Rivers Campground area to create a new campground with 190 sites out of the dynamic 10-year floodplain, including walk-in sites in the floodplain (combining proposals in Alts 4 and 5). 7 Converting areas at Yosemite Lodge to day use, parking and camping (Alt 1). 7 Adding a RV campground with 40 sites near Yosemite Lodge (Alt 5) provided that a limit of 10% of all campsites is set on the number of RV sites in the Valley. We qualify this support of new RV "camping" with the assumption that the Park Service restricts when generators are permitted for use to limit noise impacts and enforces such restrictions consistent with existing NPS policy. Again, note NPS Management Policies, 1.5 Appropriate Use of the Parks (2006). 7 At Housekeeping Camp, restoration of the riparian zone and the relocation of 30 units out of the ordinary high water mark, but within the existing footprint (Alt 5). Planners should also consider eliminating the shelter units in Housekeeping and repurpose the area into a low impact camp ground. We oppose the removal of 80 campsites in the North Pines Campground and the total restoration of the former Upper and Lower River Campgrounds as planners could provide low impact and non-permanent camping opportunities (especially for RVs) that would not impair river values. Lodging 7 The removal of four buildings in the 100 year floodplain at Yosemite Lodge. (Alt 5). Parking 7 The redevelopment of 150 additional day use parking spaces west of Yosemite Lodge (Alt 2) so long that this redevelopment does not limit the ability to develop new campsites in the area. El Capitan Meadow Restoration We support the restoration of El Capitan Meadow in a way that accommodates the public and is sensitive to the particular use patterns of climbers. "El Cap Meadow" is one of the most remarkable locations in Yosemite Valley, especially for El Cap climbers who often spend a significant amount of time studying the features on El Cap to ensure adequate familiarity with their intended climbing routes. For decades El Cap Meadow has also served as an important social focus for climbers, who come there to watch friends and other climbers on El Cap, enjoy views of the other formations in the Valley, relax in the sun, swim in the river, and escape the urban atmosphere of the mid-Valley area. It is critical that the MRP allow climbers their traditional, low impact use of El Cap Meadow when implementing these important rehabilitation measures: 7 Installing restoration fencing along the northern perimeter of the meadow (Alt 4). 7 Designating appropriate access points using boardwalks and viewing platforms (Alt 4). 7 Restoring informal trails in sensitive areas (Alt 4). 7 The selective removal of conifers that block views of El Capitan (Alt 5). III. Actions Common to All Alternatives In general, we support the Actions Common to All Alternative subject to the following considerations: Riparian, Wetland and Flood Plain Buffers The Plan proposes to: "Locate any new structures at least 150 feet from the ordinary high water mark [and] relocate or remove all campsites at least 100' from the ordinary high water mark."[vii] The Access Fund does not support formulaic, fixed-dimension buffers like this to protect riparian, wetland, and flood plain areas. There simply is not enough useable area in the Valley, and the effect is to unfairly and unnecessarily limit the possibilities for campground development, which has historically been relegated to these types of areas. Moreover, with careful planning and design, walk-in, walk-to, group, and RV campgrounds can be developed in these areas so that developed infrastructure is concentrated away from or outside sensitive areas and campsites and parking areas are sited in areas where they cause minimal disturbance to natural values. The Plan should follow the direction in the NPS's own regulations which allows for limitations on use only when "less restrictive measures will not suffice."[viii] Consequently, the following clause should be added to the second sentence in the Plan's quotation above: "? only where less restrictive measures are insufficient to protect riparian values and other ORVs." The same language should be applied to language regarding restrictions on uses in or adjacent to wetlands and floodplains. Protecting Recreational Access The Plan discusses the protection of recreational ORVs at pages 9-10, but ignores the obvious world-class and extensive climbing resources located just outside the MRP planning area (especially in the Valley

segment). Because an enormous amount of climbing and other recreational activity lies immediately outside the planning area boundary, the potential exists for recreation outside the planning area to have impacts within the planning area, particularly related to parking, hiking, and staging. One additional action in the Plan should be to preserve and manage access to recreational resources just outside the river management corridor. Identifying and planning for managed access at these locations that will protect ORVs but also protect and enhance the world class recreational opportunities found in Yosemite Valley and the Lower Merced Gorge. Camp 4 The Plan seeks to protect and enhance cultural resources, including historic, archeological, and ethnographic resources identified as part of the ORVs. These actions should include Camp 4 which is located within the Recreational Segment of the Merced Wild and Scenic River and listed with the National Register of Historic Places under "Criterion A" (Recreation/Entertainment). See more below in Section IV. Removal of Luxury Facilities and Repurposing Select Service Facilities The Access Fund supports the removal or relocation of luxury facilities and services currently within the river corridor, especially The Happy Isles Snack Stand, Yosemite Lodge Swimming Pool & Snack Stand, and the Ahwahnee tennis court and former golf course. We also support the reduction of facilities and services that are retained on-site but repurposed, including the Yosemite Village Sports Shop, Convenience Shop, and Nature Shop; the Camp 6 Day-use Parking Are; and Curry Village Residence Area. Transportation The Access Fund supports an improved transportation system for the MRP planning area including the following actions: 7 Road and intersection improvements that address congestion and improve traffic flow. 7 Parking area improvements that ensure visitors reach their destinations quickly and connect directly to Park resources where they can have their most meaningful experiences. 7 Improved transit options that offer alternatives to private vehicle access to the MRP planning area. 7 Implementing an Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and related traffic and parking information to inform visitors of conditions on a real-time basis so that they can make informed decisions about the timing and locations of their visit to Yosemite. The ITS should be made available online (and formatted for mobile devices) so that potential visitors can make planning decision before they reach the Park. 7 Improved signs and wayfinding so that visitors can easily locate destinations throughout the planning corridor. 7 Use of traffic and parking management staff during peak use periods to improve traffic flow and parking efficiency. 7 Adding bicycle racks to Valley shuttle buses to promote multi-modal access. 7 Improving key intersections to mitigate pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Biological Protections to the River Corridor The Access Fund supports the following actions to ensure biological protections within the river corridor: 7 Allowing the Merced River to flow and migrate in its natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, riprapping, or other modification of the waterway. 7 Maintaining water quality in Yosemite above the Federal and State water quality standards by monitoring and managing water quality throughout the corridor. 7 Efforts to document, monitor, protect, and enhance biological river values and meadow ecosystems to avoid adverse impacts. 7 Efforts to protect and enhance the scenic resources of the river corridor through a Visual Resources Management Program. Additional mapping is needed as many MRP reviewers will not know the location or use of many of the facilities listed on pages 10-11 for removal, repurposing, or reduction. These changes should be shown on the maps of existing conditions on pages 14 and 15 of the Alternative Concepts Workbook. IV. Key Elements Missing from all Preliminary Alternative Concepts Improving the Camping Experience Especially at Camp 4 The MRP should focus on improving the quality of the camping experience in the planning area, which is characterized by crowded sites, antiquated restrooms, mixed RV and tent sites that promote conflict, a lack of fencing and vegetation for privacy and noise reduction, widespread soil compaction and denuded areas, poorly defined tent sites, and crumbling roadways. This is particularly true at Camp 4, a historic campground used almost exclusively by the climbing community. In addition to focusing on more camping in the Park, planners should also improve the quality of the camping experience, especially at locations such as Camp 4 where climbers are forced into highly dense and low-quality campsites. Improving the basic amenities available at Camp 4 such as the bathrooms is the least Park planners could do to appropriately recognize fact that in 2003 Camp 4 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for "its significant association with the growth and development of rock climbing in the Yosemite Valley during the 'golden years' of pioneer mountaineering."[ix] Park planners should include in the MRP the several "improvements" for Camp 4 that were contemplated in the Lodge Redevelopment Plan.[x] These improvements include: 7 Showers and updated bathrooms, 7 Fencing to encourage revegetation that limits loud bus, truck, and automobile noise, 7 A foul weather cooking pavilion and communal fireplace, 7 More separation from parking areas to reduce noise, and 7 A nearby location for the Yosemite Climbing Association's proposed Yosemite Climbing Museum. Removing and Restoring the Mirror Lake Bus Road Loop One way to reduce asphalt and vehicle use in the Valley is to remove this loop, leaving just enough asphalt for bicycles and wheelchair use. Developing a Campground East of the Ahwahnee Cabins The area east of the Ahwahnee Cabins contains a degraded area previously used by the Park Service, the current Backpacker Campground, and the former Group Campground. This area could be developed with a group or walk-in campground that would allow for very efficient use of the area and minimal new infrastructure. In discussions with Park staff, we have not heard any compelling reason why this should not be considered. Redesigning the Historic Bridges Redesigning the Valley's historic bridges is a possibility vaguely alluded to in the Workbook but accorded no meaningful discussion. Given the beauty and historical character of these bridges, this possibility deserves thorough consideration in the MRP. Additional Picnicking Facilities The Park currently seems to have an "all or nothing" approach to picnicking: Yosemite visitors mostly have a choice between developed picnic areas and areas with no picnic facilities at all. Alternative 4 is the only planning concept to provide additional picnic facilities: a large site at the Rivers Campgrounds area. The Plan should provide additional opportunities. For example, in the more urbanized areas of the Valley, a more urban concept of picnicking should be afforded, with picnic tables located singly and in small groups so visitors getting out of their cars can enjoy an impromptu picnic (without barbecue facilities) without having to sit in the dirt in the established busy and highly-impacted areas adjacent to developed sites. New picnic sites would provide visitors with an opportunity for a more self-reliant and contemplative eating experience while reducing visitor dependence on the Valley's crowded and low-quality commercial food providers. An example is Church Bowl, which has long had a few battered and forgotten picnic tables scattered around that serve knowing visitors, including climbers, but rarely the general public. V. Transportation Options The Access Fund has the following comments for transportation options in the MRP: 7 We oppose the removal of 220 parking spaces at Curry Village, as proposed in Alternative Concepts 1 and 2. 7 In principle, we support the removal of Southside Drive through Stoneman Meadow proposed in Alternative Concepts 1 and 2, but we are very concerned about the traffic this would shift to the Sentinel Crossing. The impacts of this change need to be very carefully considered. 7 We do not support day use permits and reservations at this time, although we understand they may be necessary at some point in the future. The focus for now should be on voluntary use limitations based on information systems, with mandatory closures at the El Cap crossover, for example, only as a fail-safe measure. 7 We do not support overflow parking options in the West Valley; this new and impactful infrastructure development should be considered only as a last resort as a means to reduce vehicle use in the East Valley. 7 Alternative Concepts 2, 4 and 5 propose to develop parking west of Yosemite Lodge. We believe the area west of Lodge should be used for camping, but we support some new parking in this location if it can be established without any reduction in camping potential. 7 Alternative 5 proposes extending the Valley shuttle to the West Valley. We believe this should be tried on a pilot basis during the peak season to encourage dispersal of visitor use once trails and trailheads have been

sufficiently developed to accommodate such use. V. MRP Planners Should Clarified the Relationship Between the Merced River Plan and Yosemite's General Management Plan The Plan should include a chapter clarifying the MRP's relationship to the 1980 General Management Plan (GMP). Because the MRP will supersede portions of the GMP (see Workbook at page 5), this Plan should have a chapter that explicitly details the provisions and prescriptions in the GMP that will be superseded by the MRP and the reasons for each change. For example, the GMP calls for 756 campsites in the Valley but there are now only 570. The Preliminary Concepts in the Workbook call for 520, 540, 790, 660, and 940 sites respectively. These differences from the GMP should be detailed in the MRP and a similar analysis should be done for rustic lodging units, developed lodging units, employee lodging, and parking spaces, as well as changes to broad policy prescriptions, such as abandoning the GMP policy to remove cars from the Valley. CONCLUSION The Access Fund hopes these comments to the Preliminary Concepts Workbook assist Yosemite planners to identify planning issues and solutions that are important to the climbing community. The Merced River Plan provides an opportunity to appropriately reduce luxury accommodations in favor of campsites, and to protect and enhance the historic camping opportunities at Camp 4. The Plan should also protect and enhance access to the scores of specific climbing areas that lie immediately outside of the planning area boundary. Thank you for considering the importance of Yosemite to climbers worldwide and for your hard work on this extensive planning process. If you have any questions or comments please contact me at [redacted]. Sincerely,

[redacted]

[i] See the Access Fund's 2010 Scoping Comments on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan at http://www.accessfund.org/atf/cf/%7B1F5726D5-6646-4050-AA6E-C275DF6CA8E3%7D/Access%20Fund%20Scoping%20Comments%20to%20Merced%20WSR%20Plan.pdf. [ii] See the Access Fund's 2011 Comments to the Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook at http://www.accessfund.org/atf/cf/%7B1F5726D5-6646-4050-AA6E-C275DF6CA8E3%7D/CA--Merced%20Wild%20and%20Scenic%20River%20Planning%20Comments_12.14.11.pdf [iii] See the Access Fund's 2011 Comments to the Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook at endnote 2. [iv] See NPS Management Policies, 1.5 Appropriate Use of the Parks (2006). [v] In addition to the Rivers Area and the Pine and Oak area, other potential locations where we would support the creation of additional campsites include the Backpackers Expansion area and the area immediately east of the Ahwahnee cabins, the old group sites east of Backpackers Campground, the Stables Area, the Upper Pines Loop Addition and Upper Pines Walk-In area, west of Lodge area and East of Camp 4 areas, and the Pine and Oak area [vi] As we've noted before, planners should consider the viability of bus stops at key climbing locations throughout the Lower Merced Gorge such as at Arch Rock and Cookie Cliff. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. [vii] See Alternative Concepts Workbook at 5, 9. [viii] See 36 CFR ' 1.5. [ix] See NPS press release at http://web.archive.org/web/20060616141436/http://www.nps.gov/yose/news/2003/camp0227.htm. [x] See Access Fund Comments to the Yosemite Lodge Area Redevelopment Environmental Assessment Concerning Camp 4 at http://www.accessfund.org/atf/cf/%7B1F5726D5-6646-4050-AA6E-C275DF6CA8E3%7D/CA--Yosemite%20Lodge_10.2.2003.pdf.

Correspondence ID: 103 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please accept this e-mail as a petition against any potential disruption or elimination of the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. I have had several opportunities to visit the High Sierras and stay at the Merced Lake camp; first on a High Sierra Loop Hike in the summer of 2008 and again in the summer of 2009. I have spread the word to many friends and family about the beauty and natural wonders of the High Sierras and everyone I meet is interested in planning a trip. In fact, 2 friends have just returned from Yosemite last week as they included a side trip to the High Sierras in their trip through California. With all of the space and beautiful wilderness of the area, I am opposed to detracting from Lake Merced Camp in any way which would diminish or eliminate National Park visitors from having the same opportunities that I've had (and plan to enjoy in the future). As you know, the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp has been made available to all visitors for almost a century, since Steven Mather created the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp in 1916. Please don't destroy or diminish such a wonderful national treasure. Please keep the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp in tact for my children and grandchildren to also be able to enjoy. Thank you for all you do and for your thoughtful consideration of my request of you and the Yosemite National Park. Please feel free to contact me should you desire any additional comments or input on this important matter. Best regards,

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Correspondence ID: 104 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Sir or Madam: I understand that you are considering closing the Merced Lake camp. I had the opportunity to visit the camp last August, and it is a wonderful part of the high sierra experience. Furthermore, it offers better facilities than some of the other camps and close proximity to bathing areas. It is also an important way-stop on the high sierra loop trails. I urge you not to close this camp for the sake of all those who have enjoyed it and those who might take advantage of it in the future. Sincerely, Avid Hiker and Yosemite Fan

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Correspondence ID: 105 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Merced River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts Comments

Thank you for the time, energy, effort, and sincere thought invested in the development of these preliminary concepts. I appreciate the efforts to protect resources while recognizing the desires of park visitors. A plan that protects the most sensitive areas while allowing for more of a balance between visitor use and river protection in more resistant areas would be wise. As we know, there are limited places in Yosemite Valley that are both "safe" and also durable. It seems prudent to make best use of these areas, by concentrating impacts within them and dispersing use elsewhere.

I do not think that one of these alternatives is best at this point and would have a difficult time selecting one package over all the others. Below are my thoughts about various aspects of the preliminary alternatives and proposals across all alternatives:

? I support removal of rip-rap (where not essential), the removal of the footings at Happy Isles, and the Pohono Gauge Station. ? If Clark, Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee Bridges are removed, it would be helpful to replace two of the three of them with river bank friendly foot/bike bridges to allow visitor access across the river and promote dispersal of visitor use in the east end of the valley. ? I support the elimination of the concession stable and mule rides in the valley and Wawona. If the concession is not eliminated in the valley, rerouting stock use to the valley loop trail would make that trail incredibly unpleasant for hikers. (Hiking the stock trail along Tenaya Creek and out to Mirror Lake is nasty in the summer. This would become the case with the valley loop trail as well.) ? I support the elimination of raft rentals and commercial rafting. I support the continued allowance of personal paddling in the valley. Educating visitors of durable put in and take out locations is key. ? Allowing large woody debris to remain where the river deposits it is essential for the health of the river, as long as it does not threaten visitor safety of infrastructure. ? Restoration of degraded river banks/riparian areas will be helpful as long as the public is educated about the efforts and values that restoration. Many visitors want to be able to access the river in the most convenient way and have their "own" beach away from the crowds; they go where they want regardless of fences and signs. I would hope that heavily used social trails are considered and incorporated in the planning of designated access points. I learned while working as a backcountry ranger that social trails develop for a reason?people want to get to a viewpoint or access something in particular. If you block them off, others will appear leading to the same locations time after time. ? Relocation of campsites/tent cabins within 100' of the ordinary high water mark seems to be a reasonable expectation. It would be helpful to see how this criterion would actually play out: how many campsites/tent cabins/buildings would need to be relocated in order to meet it? ? Meadows are sensitive, incredibly diverse, and valuable habitats. They are also magical places to be able to linger in Yosemite Valley, out of the trees and in the light. Most of the meadows in the valley are already partially fenced. El Capitan meadow is not and is highly impacted, largely because of people wanting to watch climbers and because it is adjacent to the road. It would be helpful if the road side of the meadow could be better protected with boardwalks and designated viewing points while allowing for foot access along the current footpath along the river side of the meadow. The same goes for Leidig: bolster protection along the road side segment and allow for continued walking on the narrow footpath along the river side. If a campground or parking area is located west of Yosemite Lodge, this meadow will feel greater impact. Filling in ditches and restoring natural topography is key. ? I support restoration of the Ahwahnee golf course and tennis courts as well as the entire Wawona golf course. ? Archeological sites and traditional resource use should continue to be protected and monitored. ? Opportunity for solitude in Wilderness is paramount. Would it not be more beneficial to manage backcountry use through region quotas instead of trailhead quotas? ? Merced Lake High Sierra Camp should be reduced in size and sensitive areas restored and protected. ? I am concerned about the elimination of BoysTown because of the impact it would have on NatureBridge programs in the valley. Nowhere in this workbook is the impact mentioned nor is an alternative location for housing students (outside of rockfall zones) suggested. I support restoring Stoneman Meadow, but would suggest leaving the majority of the apple orchard parking area and Boystown unaffected unless a better option for housing students in the valley is guaranteed. ? Backpackers need a place to stay in Yosemite Valley pre and post trip. It make sense to shrink the current backpackers campground in order to buffer Tenaya Creek, but I would ask that those sites be relocated elsewhere to maintain the same number (or greater) for backpackers. ? Why was the Yosemite Lodge intersection not addressed in the alternatives (or is it assumed in the improving traffic flow statement)? ? It makes most sense from my perspective to increase the number of campsites in the valley (at the east end of Upper Pines campground, the stables, and potentially the most durable area of the old Upper River campground that has been used as a staging area for construction projects the last several years) to balance the reduction the size of Housekeeping Camp and elimination of cabins/rooms in the rockfall and 100 year flood zones. ? I support restoring the original topography of Lower River campground (and undeveloped areas of Upper River campground) and facilitating their return to a natural state. ? I support reducing the number of day use parking spaces to reduce daily peak use levels by at least 20%. (Yosemite Valley is out of control in the summer time. There are far too many people using this precious place all at the same time.) ? I support increasing public shuttle service throughout the year to the west end of Yosemite Valley. ? I am uncertain how moving housing from Yosemite Valley to El Portal would cut back on commuter traffic, even if a few office buildings are moved to El Portal. (I sense that most people who work in those offices already live outside the valley.) If anything, it seems commute traffic would increase between El Portal and the valley. This being said, I do support further development of housing, especially for families in El Portal. The quality of life for many families would be greatly improved (and potentially the quality of the work they perform if their commute is cut in half). ? If Northside Drive through Ahwahnee Meadow was eliminated, where would travel be rerouted? How would that affect traffic at alternative intersections? This would be helpful to know. ? The Camp 6 parking area is already impacted. Why not just remove the parking spaces within 100 feet of the normal high water mark/the 10 year flood zone (whichever is further back) to better protect the river. This seems a better option than converting another part of the valley into a parking area that could fill another need (including that of wildlife).

Thanks again for considering these thoughts. Best of luck compiling feedback and reworking the proposals!

~(resident of Foresta and NatureBridge employee)

Correspondence ID: 106 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I urge you to reconsider the alternatives in the plan which would eliminate or reduce the scope of the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. The camps and the program are one of the last vestiges of the real Yosemite, i.e., free of luxury hotels, shuttle buses and car traffic. Availability is already difficult via the lottery system and will only become more difficult if the NPS removes this wonderful camp. There are many native Californians such as myself who value a true wilderness experience and been transformed by my High Sierra Camp hikes.

Please keep the Lake Merced High Sierra Camp available for park visitors who want to experience the wilderness away from Yosemite Valley.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 107 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I understand you are accepting public input about the Merced River Plan at this email address.

I think it is very important to preserve the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp in its present form. It is the centerpiece of the high sierra loop trips. My wife and I were able to backpack in Yosemite for many years, but we also did the loop trip with our children at a time they could not have backpacked and as a senior citizen I recently had the pleasure of doing the loop trip again.

I think it is important to have facilities in the park that will allow people who are not able bodied enough to backpack to spend time in the backcountry.

Please preserve the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp for future generations. It is magical.

Correspondence ID: 108 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: BCH San Diego Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 14:40:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Good Day! While I do not have the time to read all the data in the documents that are very long and complex, I do have a very important point to make. And we just became aware of the limitations that are being proposed.

There should be NO REDUCTION to the access of the general public or private horse and mule owners to ride responsibly in the Yosemite or Merced River Valleys!

WHY?? Once it is gone, it will remain gone. The concept of the automobile is just over 100 years old. To ride a horse, mule, or burro has been in the human history for thousands of years. And it is the automobile that is Corporate America's mechanism to control any access to any type of National Park System. By that I mean that if the Corporations ran the Park System it would Be Disneyland!!! The only way we can have the general public REALLY EXPERIENCE the wildness and remoteness of the wild is to have them IN IT!! And unfortunately, the vast majority of the general public cannot walk into the wilderness because they ARE TOO FAT!! I am 62. I use to back pack into the forest. But now it is not a viable concept. I have discovered horses in the last couple of years. I have friends who regularly take their family "hiking in the wilderness" via a horse packing in their gear up the mountain. Why?? Because they are now older, have knee problems, and can no longer physically make the trip under their own steam.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 109 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Planners,

Please do not close the High Sierra Camp at Merced Lake! It is a vital part of that incredible, memorable loop that my wife and I have enjoyed many times. The loop is a treasure of our lives, and the Merced Lake one is special: different, wide open and pleasant, unlike any of the other camps, each of which has their own treasures.

I repeat, Do not close the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp!

Correspondence ID: 110 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: All, A couple of years ago my wife and I were lucky enough to participate in the week long High Sierra Camp session. It really was a fantastic experience that I will never forget and is perhaps the best vacations of my life. I am not a young person nor an experienced backpacker but the camps enabled me to have an experience that would not have been feasible otherwise. It really was a special experience and I would hate to diminish this for others by closing down The Merced Lake camp site. Programs like the High Sierra Camp help generate support for NPS and certainly Yosemite in particular. I encourage you to find other alternatives that do not take away one of the jewels of Yosemite. Regards,

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Correspondence ID: 111 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Sir/Madam:

It has come to my attention that there is a proposal afoot to eliminate the Lake Merced High Sierra Camp. Having done the High Sierra Loop, I can't tell you what a shame it would be if this vital part of the loop were eliminated. The loop as it currently exists allows people of all ages (the average age in my group was 65) with a wide range of fitness levels to participate in this truly memorable experience. One of the key factors in making the loop so accessible is the Lake Merced High Sierra Camp where the hikers have the opportunity to spend two nights, rest up, wash clothes and then tackle Vogelsang. The High Sierra Loop has such a fabled history and noble tradition, surely it is worth saving and nurturing. Please think of all of the young people who have not yet had the opportunity to enjoy this extraordinary adventure before you make a decision that could eliminate that opportunity forever. Thanks for your attention,

"Class" of 2010

Correspondence ID: 112 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am writing to support the continued usage & full operation of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. This Camp was a crucial part of the High Sierra experience & helped us prepare better for the more strenuous leg to Vogelsang. It is a wonderful camp & we are planning on returning with a large group this coming year. Please consider keeping it open in its current state. Thanks for your consideration!

Correspondence ID: 113 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am writing to express my dismay at the prospect of any Merced River Plan that will alter or elminate the Merced High Sierra Camp.

The Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is by far my favorite camp in the loop and i know that many other hikers feel the same. In fact i have gotten to know over the years many hikers who have been taking a two day stopover in the camp for the past few decades. By altering or eliminating that camp you would literally ruin the High Sierra camp experience for so many. I strongly urge you to consider not touching the camp at all and leaving this wonderful experience for generations to come.

thank you and best regards,

Correspondence ID: 114 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I have utilized the Merced High Sierra Camp and others and consider it one of the greatest experience of my life. I hope you will make it a top priority to preserve these extraordinary assets. Many thanks?[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 115 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am writing to support the continued operation of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. As a patron of the camp on two separate trips, I found Merced Lake to be critical to completing the loop. Not only did it provide a much needed one day respite, but allowed for a great trip to Washburn Lake. One one trip, I needed a day to recoup from a knee injury. Merced Lake is a great springboard for the strenuous trek to Vogelsang. Please give top consideration to keeping it open as is. Thanks.

Correspondence ID: 116 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: In the summer of 2010 I had the extraordinary experience of hiking the Yosemite High Camp Loop. It's not to be missed! I had the opportunity to view wild and isolated beauty that I would never had a chance to see otherwise and at the same time I had a

comfortable, warm bed and amazing, fresh food which prepared me for the next day's challenge! I'm sorry to admit that I would not attempt the same hike if I had to sleep on the ground, carry the bedding and eat freeze dried food. The camps had wonderful staff and rangers and were efficiently run and a great reward to some exhausting days. One of the camps I most remember was set beside the Merced River where we sat beside the beautiful falls and soaked our feet and regrouped for the hike to the last camp at Vogelsang. A yearling bear was drawn to the smell of dinner (he was easily chased off) and after a ranger led talk under the stars we slept to the sound of the rushing water. We spent a whole day and two nights enjoying this lovely camp leaving totally refreshed and ready for the 3,000 feet elevation gain to come. I recently read that Merced Lake Camp is being considered for some changes that may include closure. I want to voice my opposition to that possibility, it is one of the jewels of the High Camp loop and no other stop on the loop was more welcome or made the indelible impression of that camp. Please continue to offer Merced Lake Camp to all future hikers so they may enjoy its comforts and experience the beauty of the river and lake. Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 117 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To whom it may concern,

I'm writing in response to a potential plan to close the Merced Lake high sierra camp at Yosemite National Park.

During my childhood in the 1980's and 90's, my mom took me to Yosemite every year from when I was a small child until I was in my late teens. We would generally stay for about a week at the Tuolumne Meadows tent cabins. From there we would do day hikes, explore the nearby surroundings, and relax in the spectacular setting of the place. As a single mother and school teacher in Northern California, this was a great way for us to experience the wilderness together, under circumstances which backpacking would have been impractical. The price was affordable even on her meager young teacher's salary, and the accommodations were entirely safe and very convenient. The experience has been and remains unforgettable, and I will always be grateful for the experiences I had there.

As an adult, I have a deep affection for being outdoors. Even today I took a lovely hike in the Wawayanda state park in New Jersey, a short drive from my home in Brooklyn, NY. I backpack regularly, and support the local parks and various conservation societies with my vote and with small financial contributions. My early experience in Yosemite was certainly a strong component of my love of and support for nature.

Last summer, my mother had the opportunity to hike between a number of the high sierra camps, including Merced Lake. She had recently been through a divorce, and was living on her own for the first time in a number of years. She joined a group led by one of your excellent rangers, and spent a week experiencing nature one her own. Her earlier experience at Tuolumne gave her confidence that the experience would be a safe and rewarding one. At 63, there is certainly no way she would have undertaken such a trip on her own without the infrastructure of the tent cabins. From later conversations with her, I believe the experience was one of the richest of her life, and one she will always cherish.

I know nothing of the financial situation of the park service in general, nor of Yosemite or the high sierra camps in particular. I can only assume that they are currently dire. I understand that you are not proposing to close all of the high sierra camps, and that experiences like the one my mom had last summer will still essentially be available to people at reasonable cost. Despite this, I think that closing the camp is a mistake.

The current financial difficulties, while probably severe, will surely pass with the business cycle. In the long run, closing Merced Lake completely (rather than somehow reducing its budget and keeping it functional), will make it difficult to reverse the decision in the future when financial times are improved. For example, closing the camp, reprinting the maps, and fully returning the campsite to a state of nature is bound to be costly. That cost combined with that of rebuilding the camp later may cost more than maintaining it as it is. Moreover, once the camp returns to a state of nature, there will be pressure from some to keep it that way. A political as well as fiscal battle may ensue should you wish to recreate the camp.

The closing of the camp would also reduce the occupancy by something like 1/5. This would mean that each year, significantly fewer people like my mom would be able to experience nature in such a unique and powerful way. This would be unfortunate. Besides helping people establish a love for the outdoors, you are one of the few organizations in the nation fighting our national trend toward poor health and obesity arising from physical inactivity. As a society, we need more experiences like those you provide, not fewer.

Please try to save the Merced Lake high sierra camp so that you can continue to help people like my mom find their way to the miracles of nature that only you can provide.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 118 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Greetings, I went on the High Sierra Hike with Ranger Dick about 2 years ago. It was a fantastic experience. Where else in the

US can you hike in the wilderness for so long, yet still have some creature comforts?. I am in great support of keeping the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. I plan on one summer very soon of returning and experiencing this loop hike again. Thanks for taking the time to read this. Let me know if I can be of further support.

Correspondence ID: 119 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To Whom it May Concern: I am writing to strongly endorse the continual operation of the Merced High Sierra Camp. It provided my husband and me with a once-in-a-lifetime experience when we joined a trip during the summer of 2010. The setting is unsurpassed, the staff is excellent, the food first-rate. The tents are comfortable and evoke memories of long ago summers, when Stephen Mather and others envisioned backcountry trips for people who wanted to see the pristine beauty of the High Sierra. Please do everything in your power to protect this unique area for future generations. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 120 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Last year at 68 years of age, I spent five days hiking in the High Sierras. I was with my husband, 71 years of age and our son, 43. Although I can say unequivocally we were in great shape for our five hiking days, my husband developed something in his gut when we reached Merced Lake. The staff there were fantastic. So instead of a ruined trip because of (1) a stopping point in the most exquisite hike with remarkable and able staff in the High Sierras and (2) a day of rest, both of these variables allowed my husband to recover and continue on a trip that we will remember as incredibly special if we live two or twenty years more . As often as I consider the citizen's perspective and its potential impact on the continuation and well being of a place that is without compare in the lower 48, may I add my voice to those of the prestigious and less so to implore you to save an area that I want my granddaughters to see. Lily and Jessie are 10 years old. Their parents are outdoor people. The twins are learning to hike, kayak, mountain bike but most important to appreciate the beautiful bounty of the USA. In an era when most families don't have significant outdoor memories to share with the next generation, our granddaughters have been down the Colorado River with their parents on a private trip and can imagine a trip to the High Sierras as a very important achievement in one of the most bountiful joys of our country.

If I sound over the top, it's because I'm sitting in a motel waiting to take my husband home after a robot-assisted removal of his prostate for cancer.

Sincerely Yours,

Correspondence ID: 121 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please save the Merced H.S.Camp. Do a loop trip and you will never again think of getting rid of ANY of the H.S.Camp. It's the experience of a lifetime.

Correspondence ID: 122 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: As an advocate for the Merced River, and natural processes in general, I would ask you when considering the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook, Spring 2012, to give the river as much unimpeded, free space (the purple areas in the alternative concepts) as you possibly can when coming up with a final alternative. I know, as a hydrogeologist, that the river will, given enough time, take all parts of the valley floor as its own, sequentially, through time. Please keep in mind that rockfall and rockfall blowdown is your other major natural phenomena to consider when choosing alternatives. I do like your actions and potential actions common to all alternatives as they consider natural processes and the health of the river and its ecosystem. I hope many of the potential actions will become actions in the final analysis.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 123 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please do not close the High Sierra Camps or ban horses from taking people to the high country. Thousands of us have enjoyed these aspects of Yosemite for years. What would be next, elimination of all campgrounds in Yosemite, no back country hiking permits, allowing only day passes into the Park. Please, don't search for more restrictions to apply to Yosemite just to satisfy a minority of activists. Yosemite is a world park and should be available to everyone!

Correspondence ID: 124 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am writing in regards to the Merced River Plan, more specifically the High Sierra Camps.

As a guide of the camps I have had the opportunity to see and experience the High Sierra Camps often and to interact with those trips. I have to say that the people on those trips absolutely LOVE it! I have never had anyone not say it was worth every ounce of energy. Many of them have never been on a backpacking trip and would have never experienced the wilderness if it were not for those camps already established. Some people out there are at the age, where they may not be able to do a long trip and carry all the stuff required for a 5-7 day adventure, or even just an overnight one. It should not be an elitist thing to be able to hike in the wilderness and stay the night. Having those camps open allows those who would normally not be able to make it out there a chance to see the "insides of Yosemite". It helps instill awareness and inspire environmental stewardship, something that is worth more then any monetary value. Not only is there the environmental aspect and awareness it brings, but the camaraderie that these people experience as they hike along, the new friendships they make or a rekindling of old ones. There are the many challenges that one must overcome on these trips that one never forgets. One gains so much from these trips, personal and physical. The kids who come on these trips see life in another way, one with out cell phones, radios, and TV's. Instead they have only the campfires, stories told by all, and the tiredness they earned by hiking through one of the most beautiful places in the world. Not to mention the growing strength they have with their families. The Merced Camp acts as not only a resting spot, which is often times very much needed and appreciated, but also a place of friendships, passion, love, and growth.

I ask to please keep the Merced High Sierra Camp established, as it is an important part of the loop and life, as more should know it. It has been there for nearly 100 years, first established in 1916, it survived both World Wars, a depression and a recession, and it has brought insight, love, blood, sweat, tears and joy to many, but most importantly it has given so many individuals the chance to experience the wilderness that Yosemite has to offer. That is a priceless opportunity and exactly what Steven Mather had intended when he established them so many years ago.

Sincerely, Park Ranger of Yosemite and Guide of the High Sierra Loop

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Correspondence ID: 125 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I just learned that your new Merced River Plan proposes the elimination of the Merced High Sierra Camp. Merced Lake High Sierra Camp was created in 1916 by Steven Mather, the father of the National Park Service. My husband and I recently hiked the the high sierra loop trail, staying at each of the camps and of all our hiking trips, this was one of the most spectacular and memorable. We could not have enjoyed your beautiful park without the ability to stay at all the camps. We particularly liked Merced Lake Camp. I urge you to keep this historic high sierra camp open for others to enjoy as much as we did. Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 126 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Yosemite Planning,

I had the great fortune to hike the High Sierra loop and it was one of the best experiences of my life. I am writing because I recently found out there are plans to close the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp and I believe this would truly be a mistake. The High Sierra Camps are a unique way to experience Yosemite and should be preserved for future generations of hikers. Please do not close the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 127 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I was dismayed to hear that a few of the alternatives for the Merced plan included eliminating the Merced High Sierra Camp. The High Sierra Camps are one of the Jewels of our National Park system. I had the joy two years ago to do a ranger led High Sierra Camp circuit. This was one of the highlights of my life. The High Sierra Camps allow people like myself to spend quality time in the interior of the park without having to carry so much weight on my back. They also are in some of the most beautiful areas of the park.

The high Sierra camps were all memorable but Merced was extremely memorable. Anything done to eliminate this camp would be a crime. I don't understand why this is even being considered. Before anyone votes, they should do the High Sierra camps circuit with a ranger. It is the most amazing experience anyone can have in their life!!!!

Thank you for listening to me.

Correspondence ID: 128 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please do not illuminate this beautiful camp! Many people who would not otherwise be comfortable in the back country are able to enjoy Yosemite by camping there. I hiked the High Sierra trail in 2010 and stayed at the Merced camp, it was a wonderful experience and I would hate to see that possibility taken away...please keep ALL the camps in tact. Thank you,

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Correspondence ID: 129 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: We visited the High Sierra Camps Jul 2009 via a ranger led hike with Dick Ewart. It was a wonderful experience. I feel it is a great way to experience the outdoors with little impact to the environment. I would hate to see Merced camp closed so others would not be able to visit Yosemite as we did. On the other hand I have not visited Yosemite Valley in peak season, but after watching your webcast on the Merced River workshop I do think it would enhance visitors experience if you limited autos and introduced a shuttle as they have at Zion. Also a reservation type system for day use I feel would enhance visitors experience to Yosemite Valley during peak season.

Correspondence ID: 130 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: The Merced Lake Camp and the High Sierra Camps loop is a national treasure. It would be an absolute travesty to fail to keep them open to the public.

Please keep them as they are!

Correspondence ID: 131 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: This seems to be the plan with the most common sense

Topic Question 3: Removing the stable is not acceptable, you remove the historical and traditional way that Yosemite was enjoyed for many generations.

Comments: The historical and traditional use of stock in the park must be maintained. The facilities must also be maintained. This is how the park was settled and continues to be a major factor in maintaining the wilderness values of the park.

Correspondence ID: 132 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Back Country Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 16:14:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: For the most part, yes. However certain aspects go to far and have too great an impact on visitor serving services.

Topic Question 2: This is the best plan.

Topic Question 3: This plan has too great an impact on the stables located at Curry Village. Day rides into the park have great value and are at the foundation of the forming of the park. Not everyone can hike a trail and for some, riding through the countryside on horseback is the only way they can experience the wilderness away from their cars.

Topic Question 4: This is the worst plan option as this plan eliminates the stables at Curry Village. Equestrian users will be barred from enjoying this area of the park. Horseback riding into the park has great value and is at the foundation of the forming of the park. Not everyone can hike a trail and for some, riding through the countryside on horseback is the only way they can experience the wilderness away from their cars.

Topic Question 7: Alternative 1 is preferred. Alternatives 4 & 5 are next best.

Topic Question 8: The impact to the horseback riding stables is of great concern to me.

Comments: Do not eliminate the Wawona stables. Horseback riding into the park has great value and is at the foundation of the forming of the park. Not everyone can hike a trail and for some, riding through the countryside on horseback is the only way they can experience the wilderness away from their cars. Any impact on the waterways can be effectively managed and should not be a concern.

Correspondence ID: 133 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? Yes they have very much so.

-Do the alternatives address the stated goal for this plan? Yes and no. The alternatives are lacking full explanation however they give a full view on page 26 & 27.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 1 Alternative Concept 1 seems to be an ace in the hole however it is also a last resort. Tearing down Tecoya housing for employees is a big no.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept 2 I'd say go with Concept 2. It's better for both parties and no employees will be relocated. So yes on Alt. Con 2. Yes.

Correspondence ID: 134 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes.

Topic Question 2: OK

Topic Question 3: NO. There is no need to eliminate equine travel from the Curry Stables. This is detrimental to those people with disabilities who are not able to walk.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 135 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 16:31:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: They seem to as long as they balance the impact on visitor service services.

Topic Question 3: This is unacceptable as it impacts the stables at Curry Village.

Topic Question 4: This is unacceptable as it impacts the stables at Curry Village.

Topic Question 5: This is a good plan.

Topic Question 6: This is a good plan.

Comments: Please do not change anything that will impact equestrian activities within the park. Horse and mule riding has been part of the park since the beginning. Impact on the waterways can be managed in a way that doesn't eliminate or reduce these critical visitor services. Please DO NOT eliminate the Wawona stables. Find another way to achieve the project goals. Do not eliminate the Curry Village stables, fix them up, make them clean and safe. Not everyone can hike the backcountry. I have ashthma and can not walk long distances, so horseback riding is my only means of accessing the wilderness areas of the park.

Correspondence ID: 136 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes

Topic Question 2: OK

Topic Question 3: Absolutely not. Equine rides from the Curry Village Stables should continue as they have been doing. Disabled people should be able to visit our forests by horse or mule back if they are unable to walk.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 137 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: NO on Proposal #2, it is important to keep the trails open.

Topic Question 2: Proposal #1, Make the stabling area better.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 138 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horseman's Association Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 17:02:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I believe this option represents the best solution for the broadest possible use case in the Merced River Plan.

Topic Question 2: I am in favor of only this option and it restores the stables and continue to allow disabled or partially disables persons to ride part of the park and enjoy the same experience. I was badly injured in 1995 and my right knee shattered, since then my only way to enjoy the parks has been by horseback. As a traditional and enjoyable way to see the park I highly encourage the continued use of the stables. Without them many will never enjoy the REAL Yosemite. I am also in support of all Backcountry Equestrian Use and bring my own horse to Yosemite to enjoy all the splendor. I am a certified in Gentle Use practices and have the highest respect for the land, the management of these resources and the people who continue to protect the park for generations to enjoy.

Topic Question 3: I do not support the elimination of public horse use.

Topic Question 4: I do not support the removal of the stables and the replacement with a campground and parking lot.

Topic Question 5: Might consider if item 14 (Stables Area: Restoration of the Concessioner Stables area and Merced Lake High Sierra Camp) were a part of this consideration.

Topic Question 6: Might consider if item 14 (Stables Area: Restoration of the Concessioner Stables area and Merced Lake High Sierra Camp) were a part of this consideration.

Topic Question 7: Clearly Concept 1 do its restoration of the stables and continued rides in the park.

Topic Question 8: Any concern eliminating horse use in the park is an issue for me regardless if it is taking away a concessionaires living or restricting trails or backcountry usage.

Topic Question 9: I am flexible on all other issues and usage considerations as long as traditional horse use in the park is not impacted.

Comments: I am pleased to see the following statement as part of the Merced River Plan.

Dismissed from further analysis. Public scoping and subsequent public meetings and comment periods have resulted in requests to include certain actions that, while relevant to the management of Yosemite National Park, are outside the scope of this planning effort. Some of these suggestions could be better addressed in different projects. Others were found to be unreasonable or infeasible as they would violate law or policy, or would contribute to other resource concerns or hazards. Actions that were considered but dismissed from further analysis in this plan include:

? Elimination of all stock use on hiking trails

Correspondence ID: 139 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Thank you for providing the opportunity for private citizens who are long-time visitors (35 y ears) and lovers of Yosemite to comment on the Merced River Plan. I understand how much work has gone into creating this first set of alternatives and attmepting to balance the various suggestions received in the initial public comment phase. Since the workbook comment form's format online does not permit me to respond to the Merced River Plan Workbook in a way that is adequate for my assessments, I am mailing my comments.

There is not once single alternative that I can come close to entirely supporting. All contain major flaws.

I realize that so much human development has taken place in Yosemite Valley over the last 150 years, it is now impossible to turn back the clock and return the Valley to a more pristine state. It is not even possible to reverse much of the development so Yosemite Valley could become like Kings Canyon with four campgrounds, a relatively small lodge, store, and resturant with the rest relatively undistrubed. There is too much precedence for the level of human development that now exists in Yosemite Valley to reverse it. Therefore, my comments are not a reflection of what I consider the ideal plan for the Merced River corridor.

My comments reflect what I realize is whay may stand a chance of being adopted in a final plan.

Actions Common to All:

The delinieated Free-Flowing Conditions, Water Quality, Geologic/Hydroligical Values, Biological Values, Scenic Values, and Cultrual Values should all be implemented.

On the Recreational Values, I disagree with "Continue to impose existing regulations on group size limits, area closures, and others." The current group size limits are one of the major causes of destruction to all backcountry areas of the Sierra. Group sizes should be limited to a maximum of 10 people in all wilderness areas of the Sierra.

On the Facilities Reduced Across All Alternatives, I agree with four of the five alternatives. However, the Yosemite Valley Backpackers Campground should not be reduced. Those with a valid Wilterness Permit for the next day or as the final day of their trip, should be allowed a place to camp the night before and/or the final night without being forced to obtain an advanced reservation (if one is available) at one of the other drive-in campgrounds. Reducing the Backpackers Campground would be an unnecessary hardship for those who are merely passing through Yosemite Valley for one night on teh way to and from backcountry destinations. If the National Park Service believes the Backpackers Campground is beking abused by certain parties, they should enforce the existing rules instead of punishing legitimate backcountry hikers.

The Alternatives:

As mentioned above, I find serious flaws with all of the Alternatives. When a preferred alternative is ultimately proposed, I believe it should incorporate various elements from each of the currently proposed Alternatives. Accordingly, I will divide my comments into the major planning areas with the elements that I support taken from various alternatives along with a few suggestions not contained in any of the alternatives.

I support/agree with:

Park Operations: Housing for 920 concession employees provided in Yosemite Valley with 290 relocated to El Portal.

Transportaion: Bus and transi options available to visitors. Real-time information on traffic and congestion provided. Corridor-widing parking of 7,900 spaces, with 5,450 in the Valley (includes additional 150 spaces west of Yosemite Lodge as in Alternative 4. Public transit and bus options expanded with overflow parking in El Portal with shuttle service to Yosemtie Valley.

Restoration: Former Lower Pines Campground, Group Camp, Greenmeyer Sandpi, partial restoration of former Rivers Campgrounds, Camp 6, Housekeeping Camp.

El Portal valley oaks enhancement: Prohibit parking under the dripline of valley oak trees; restore understory of trees to natural conditions.

El Capitan Meadow restoration: Use restorationi fencing along northern perimeter of meadow and designate appropriate access points using boardwalks and viewing platforms. Restore informal trails in sensitive areas.

Bridges: the removal of Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee Bridges to be replaced by foot bridges and the removal of rip-rap anywhere it is deemed appropriate.

Camp 6: The Camp 6 parking lot would be moved north, protecting wetlands and reducing parking within 150 feet of the river. Restoration of riparian area; relocation of parking northward, away from river. The total number of day use parking spaces presented in the alternatives is either 550 or 750. Perhaps a number in between (600-650) is possible.

Paddling: Private paddling allowed by permit only on stretches of river within all segments; commercial boating prohibited.

Picknicking: Tables and parking stalls provided to ensure appropriate public access to popular beach area. REtain all the current picnic areas and add a picnic area to former Lower River Campground site.

Camping: Opportunities in Yosemtie Valley increase with addition of roughtly 30 walk-in sites at the former Upper River Cmapground.

Addition of recreational vehicle campground loop with 40 RV sites; addition of walk-in campground with 50 sites.

Camp 4 expanded eastward to provided additional 16 walk-in sites.

Restoration of the riparian zone in vicinity of campgroudns by removing sites within 100 feet of the ordinary high water mark and restoring native plant communities.

Housekeeping Camp: Restoration of the riparian and flood plain ecosystem. Why are the alternatives only 1) the complete removal and restoration of Housekeeping Camp, 2) the removal of 180 units out of the ordinary high water mark; retains a total of 84 units or 3) the removal of 30 units out of the ordinary high water mark, but within the existing footprint; retains a total of 266 units? Is it not possible to come up with something in between? For example, the removal of 100 units and the restoration of the riparian and flood plain ecosystem?

Curry Village: Restoration of Stoneman Meadwo including removal of Southside Drive segment through Stoneman Meadow and realignment of road through Boys Town area.

Reduction in lodging at Curry Village, including removal of 40 units within the rockfall hazard zone, removal of 20 tent cambins at Boys Town for road re-alignment. Retains of a total of 440 units.

Yosemite Lodge: Redesign of Yosemite Lodge out of the 100-year flood plain and west of Yosemite Lodge area re-designed to provide additional 150 parking spaces add roughly 50 units (NOT the 200 suggested in Alternative 5) to make up for the loss of lodging at Curry Village.

Merced Lake High Sierra Camp: None of the alternatives seem to adequately address this issue. The number of lodgeing units should be reduced. The backpackers campground hsould remain, but be reduced in size.

In conclusion, I hope that the National Park Service recognizes the sacred trust you keep in Yosemite Valley. The timelessness of this altogether unique place possesses value far beyond any immediate economic or political circumstance. Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 140 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: ETI corrall 138 Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 17:10:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: This is a bad idea. We need more not less horseback trails!

Topic Question 8: # 2 means less horseback riding so NO to this!!!

Comments: sorry I did not read the whole proposal. I just want to make sure that the trails are not taken away from the horseback riders and that you keep the stables. The more there are of horse trails and stables the better!!!!! We have lost so much of nature. Please lets keep it natural for future generations including how folks are able to see the nature! Horseback riding is the 2nd most natural way to see things. Walking yourself being the first.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 141 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: If the camping foot print is reduced, then I advocate that the park reduce the number of RV accessible sites - to encourage lower impact camping.

Topic Question 3: I am opposed to any alternative concepts that cater to RVs, which create noise, pollution and create a less positive experience for tent campers. I oppose the addition of RV only loops. There is an inequitable favoritism toward RVs by charging the same fees for RVs and by offering a dump station. Those who practice tent camping do not have "extra" amenities and pay the same fees. When someone purchases a campsite, they should indicate that they have an RV, which would be a higher rate (this price structure should be by vehicle and not by site). No site should be called "RV only."

Topic Question 4: I am opposed to any alternative concepts that cater to RVs, which create noise, pollution and create a less positive experience for tent campers. I oppose the addition of RV only loops. There is an inequitable favoritism toward RVs by charging the same fees for RVs and by offering a dump station. Those who practice tent camping do not have "extra" amenities and pay the same fees. When someone purchases a campsite, they should indicate that they have an RV, which would be a higher rate (this price structure should be by vehicle and not by site). No site should be called "RV only."

Topic Question 5: I am opposed to any alternative concepts that cater to RVs, which create noise, pollution and create a less positive experience for tent campers. I oppose the addition of RV only loops. There is an inequitable favoritism toward RVs by charging the same fees for RVs and by offering a dump station. Those who practice tent camping do not have "extra" amenities

and pay the same fees. When someone purchases a campsite, they should indicate that they have an RV, which would be a higher rate (this price structure should be by vehicle and not by site). No site should be called "RV only."

Topic Question 6: I am opposed to any alternative concepts that cater to RVs, which create noise, pollution and create a less positive experience for tent campers. I oppose the addition of RV only loops. There is an inequitable favoritism toward RVs by charging the same fees for RVs and by offering a dump station. Those who practice tent camping do not have "extra" amenities and pay the same fees. When someone purchases a campsite, they should indicate that they have an RV, which would be a higher rate (this price structure should be by vehicle and not by site). No site should be called "RV only."

Topic Question 7: If the camping foot print is reduced, then I advocate that the park reduce the number of RV accessible sites - to encourage lower impact camping.

I am opposed to any alternative concepts that cater to RVs, which create noise, pollution and create a less positive experience for tent campers. I oppose the addition of RV only loops. There is an inequitable favoritism toward RVs by charging the same fees for RVs and by offering a dump station. Those who practice tent camping do not have "extra" amenities and pay the same fees. When someone purchases a campsite, they should indicate that they have an RV, which would be a higher rate (this price structure should be by vehicle and not by site). No site should be called "RV only."

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 142 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of CA Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: For: I do want #14 Stables Area: Restoration of the Concessioner Stables area and Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. Many people including children & the handicapped, who don't own horses would be able to ride a horse in Yosemite.

Topic Question 3: Against: I totally disagree with #16 about removing Stables Area: Restoration of the Concessioner Stables area and Merced Lake High Sierra Camp thus eliminating the opportunity to be able to ride a horse in Yosemite. Many people including children & the handicapped, who don't own horses would be able to ride a horse in Yosemite.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 143 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: BCHC Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: No on concept #2

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 144 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Keep historic riding available in the valley. For some this will be lifetime experience and should not be denied.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 145 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Greetings,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. In my opinion, Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is a National Treasure and should be treated as such. I feel that it is a historic and essential part of Yosemite, and the eventual plan that is chosen should reflect that.

[redacted] formerly of the US Forest Service

Correspondence ID: 146 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Equestrian Trail Inc. Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: 14. Stables Area: Restoration of the Concessioner Stables area and Merced Lake High Sierra Camp good idea

Topic Question 3: 16. Stables Area: Restoration of the Concessioner Stables area and Merced Lake High Sierra Camp; eliminates commercial day rides; removes ~ 60 lodging units and all associated infrastructure this is bad idea

Topic Question 4: 13. Camping: Concessioner Stables area re-developed as new campground with ~40 drive-in sites; Merced Lake High Sierra Camp converted to temporary pack camp and all infrastructure removed leave horse concessions in Yosmite

Comments: keep horses in Yosmite

Correspondence ID: 147 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I strongly object to alternative concept 2. Stock use is a part of the Park's history and it should not be deliminated. For some people it is the only way they can enjoy the Park as walking is not something they are able to do!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 148 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 17:45:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No. Removing the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp takes away opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Topic Question 2: Object to restoration involving removal of Merced Lake High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure.

Topic Question 3: Object to removal of Merced Lake High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure.

Topic Question 4: Object to removal of Merced Lake High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure.

Topic Question 5: Object if High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure is removed and only backpackers' camp is retained; will not allow access to those who cannot carry heavy backpacks.

Topic Question 6: Object if High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure is removed and only backpackers' camp is retained; will not allow access to those who cannot carry heavy backpacks. Like preserving diversified visitor experiences and shuttle system instead of cars.

Topic Question 7: Due to variations in how the material is presented in the Workbook, it is difficult to ascertain whether any plan preserves the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp lodging, but I prefer any plan which preserves access to the Camp as it exists resulting in access to the entire High Sierra Loop system of camps.

Topic Question 8: Removing the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp takes away opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Topic Question 9: Preserving access to all High Sierra Camps and the Loop Trail, as a tradition in support of the National Park Service mission and as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Comments: I have a deep regard for the dual missions of the National Park Service of preservation and enjoyable access. Yosemite's High Sierra Camps have provided access to many who could never access the wilderness experience without some assistance. Hiking the Loop trail was one of the most transformative experiences of my life. I therefore do not support of the series of alternative concepts which propose the elimination of camping infrastructure at the Merced High Sierra Camp, which would foreclose the possibility of completing the Loop.

I was present at Merced High Sierra Camp when a tremendous storm broke. Many backpackers were flooded out, and hikers who made it in to camp thought that they might have died had the camp not been there to provide shelter. Merced Camp has provided an important way station for people accessing the wilderness for many years with relatively low impact, especially compared to what is available in the Valley.

For me, and the folks I've met on those hikes, the High Sierra Camps exemplify the best of what the National Parks have to offer. The camps support the dual missions of the National Parks: to preserve scenic beauty, and to provide access for the

public's enjoyment. The interpretive education provided by the naturalist ranger on a guided hike is unparalleled, preserving an important cultural wilderness tradition that is not replaceable by plans which value a total self-sufficiency available to only a narrow range of the completely able-bodied public.

Please honor the dual purposes of the NPS and please do not close off one of the few wilderness experiences available to people of average means and physical abilities. Please keep the healing wilderness experience provided by the High Sierra Camps and the Loop trail available to the public.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 149 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: BCHA - SD Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 17:49:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: No! Please don't reduce rides at the Curry Village stables. Thank you.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 150 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I believe so, yes.

Topic Question 2: Looks OK except for such a large reduction in camping area.

Topic Question 3: I absolutely disagree with Management Action 16's elimination of commercial dayrides. Horses have been ridden in the area since before it was a park. I don't see fields of invasive hay growing all over the place, and disposal or composting of manure isn't a big deal. Anyone who has ridden horses in the park can testify what a wonderful experience it is, and I'd hate to see that opportunity eliminated for future generations.

Topic Question 4: Management Action 13 is unclear to me. If Concessioner's Stables are redeveloped into a new campground, does this mean that the stables are eliminated? If so, I absolutely disagree for the same reasons as above on Concept 2 Management Action 16.

Topic Question 5: Looks OK to me

Topic Question 6: Looks OK to me

Topic Question 8: Proposals 2 & 3 both seem to eliminate horsebackriding; I strongly support keeping horsebackriding opportunities for the public in the park. It would be interesting to know why elimination is being proposed.

Comments: I'd like to see horse riding opportunities for the public remain part of the Yosemite experience.

Correspondence ID: 151 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 18:53:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really

They are too general about Trail redesign and removal. Are the redesign plans for all users.

Topic Question 2: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors and Reduces visitors to unacceptable levels

Topic Question 3: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors and Reduces visitors to unacceptable levels

Topic Question 4: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors and Reduces visitors to unacceptable levels

Topic Question 5: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors and Reduces visitors to unacceptable levels

Topic Question 6: Yes, Expansion and retention of commercial services to accommodate visitor use levels

Topic Question 7: Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave park to obtain services. This is a no brainer. I do not like the portion of removing the Auto Shop, I have used this shop my self once, enabling my family to enjoy our stay.

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback riding. This service allows visitors to experience new adventures.

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendly environment for all visitors. Allow them to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft trip or a horseback ride

Comments: NPS needs to be better about notifing all users about these coment periods.

Correspondence ID: 152 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 18:54:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I would like to express my concern about any changes to the current recreational use of the Park by stock users and commercial stock organizations that operate stock operations within the Park. Stock use is one of the most enjoyable activities that visitors to the Park can achieve, as the experience of riding a horse or a mule in the great west of the United States by visitors from all around the world

Those who imagined and relished the establishment of a Park were transported through this beautiful area by horse or mule. The Park was built with the help of these animal. Stock use in the Park is a very historic activity that should never be denied or restricted. We ask that no action be taken to change the current activities of stock use in the Park as it would have a highly negative effect on the public's ability to enjoy the Park to its fullest.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 153 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Mather Saddle and Pack Station Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 19:04:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Dear Superintendent, I would like to express my concern about any changes to the current recreational use of the Park by stock users and commercial stock organizations that operate stock operations within the Park. I believe that stock use is one of the most enjoyable activities that visitors to the Park can achieve, as the experience of riding a horse or a mule in the great west of the United States by visitors from all around the world.

Those who imagined and relished the establishment of a Park were transported through this beautiful area by horse or mule. The Park was built with the help of these animals. Stock use in the Park is a very historic activity hat should never be denied or restricted.

I ask that no action be taken to change the current activities of stock use in the Park as it would have a highly negative effect on the public's ability to enjoy the Park to its fullest.

Respectfully,

[redacted] Mather Saddle and Pack Station

Correspondence ID: 154 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Equestrian Trails, Corral #2; Rose Bowl Riders, USET Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I can hardly believe that you would consider closing the stables! I defy you to find equestrians who do not respect the country over which they ride. I have never seen any rider throw trash on the ground, scrawl their "names" on rocks, or cut out new trails for the excitement value of going over rough terrain. However, I have seen bicyclers and hikers do all of the above. Why do any plans for restoration have to chase away people who have treasured Yosemite for years? Value those who have loved Yosemite!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 155 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. They are too general about Trail redesign and removal. Are the plans recognizing all trail users: hikers and equestrians?

Topic Question 2: Definately NO. This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 3: Definately NO. This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 4: Definately NO. This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 5: Definately NO. This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 6: YES. Retention and expansion of commercial services to acccomodate visitor use levels is smart.

Topic Question 7: Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave the park to obtain services. Removing the auto shop is pure stupidity!

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback. This service allows visiors to experience new and unique adventures.

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendlyenviromnemt for all visitors. Allow visitors to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft trip or a horseback ride.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 156 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: none Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: yes

Topic Question 2: can you imagine if we honored the 100 year flood plain? I like the concept which gives area locals an alterniative to having to make an appointment to get in the park. Minimum vehicles quotas

Topic Question 6: I definitely do not want MORE PARKING eating up the land.

Topic Question 8: If parking were outside the park, (elportal) wouldn't that itself be detrimental to the river ecologoy? Is there even SPace for a lot? Would the fuel of transporting visiotrs be pre-emptive.

If a visitor reservation system went into effect, how would international travellers get that information? The region would see in influx of unintended "overnighters" who didn't make reservations. A very large campaign would need to be mounted so the world would know

Comments: I really am grateful to have learned about participate in the webinar. Unfortunately, I didn't have the workbook, and am very busy, I am squeezing this comment in before the deadline. I'm sorry I don't have the details fresh.

I have never heard that bridges obstruct water flow. Of course they do--so I am glad that this was explained further. I am now in agreement that if they need to go, they need to go.

Would you really tear down the buildings in the village? Souvenier shops can go, ad fast food, but wouldn't you still want the Non profit association there?

I also can see a need for re-educating the public as to what recreation is and is not in Yosemite Park. If bike rentals and hosebackriding are eliminated (which is fine with me), folk unaccostomed to bird watching and flower identifying would be at a loss what to do.

Great Presentation; the quality of your expertise shows in the data. Keep me in your email loop

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Correspondence ID: 157 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 20:41:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I do not really understand the differences between the alternatives. I have never visited Yosemite, but want to one day. I have a relative who camps and hikes a lot and she has visited many times.

I want to see the Merced River and Yosemite Valley managed in such a way as to provide access for both day or short term visitors that are not extreme sports persons and also for those active persons who can do the hard bits. It also needs to be managed so as to increase the naturalness of the area and prevent degradation due to over-use and over-developement.

I apologize for my lack of specifics, but I am interested.

Correspondence ID: 158 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: BCHC - Sequoia Unit Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am for upgrading any and all stables in within the Park system and Yosemite park specifically.

Topic Question 3: I am against anything that limits horse and pack stock in any park. Horses and packing have occurred in the Parks for well over 100 years and need to continue. Limiting stables and/or pack stations limits the options of those with physical limitations from enjoying the the Park as well as those of us who just enjoy a nice ride on horseback.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 159 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: NO

Topic Question 3: NO

Topic Question 4: NO

Topic Question 5: NO

Topic Question 6: YES. A broad spectrum of experiences should be suppported. Traditional stock use as travel shoud be supported, as should rafting. All experiences should be sustainable and practice Gentle Use ethics.

Topic Question 7: See Q6

Topic Question 8: Removing the stables creates problems for people who enjoy nature with their equine companions.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 160 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Some parts do, but the elimination of livestock is a huge mistake.

Topic Question 2: No Definitely not!!!!

Topic Question 3: No, This will not meet the needs of the people visiting the Park.

Topic Question 4: No, by eliminating the Commercial horseback rides in Yosemite, you will be eliminating wonderful experiences people have for sightseeing in a relaxing, historically correct manner. What are you thinking?

Topic Question 5: No, absolutely disagree with reducing or eliminating use of horses and mules.

Topic Question 6: Yes, yes, yes. Improve the services for the many, many people that visit the park every year. Have the touring done correctly, not by eliminating services (like horseback riding)

Topic Question 7: Concept 5 is the only one that makes sense.

Topic Question 8: 1-4, eliminating or reducing livestock uses creates utmost concerns. Concept 5 makes sense in serving the needs of many visitors.

Topic Question 9: Don't eliminate horse touring in the Valley or Wawona. This should not even be an option.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 161 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 21:08:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: The valley stables should be kept in the location where it is now. It is not only part of the experience for guests, it is vital to the high country in packing suplies in and out. Ihave been riding the rental horses/mules and bringing my own horse into the valley for 60 yrs. It is a historic place!

Correspondence ID: 162 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: CSHA, ETI, Back County Horsemen Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Please be advised that I have been riding my horse in and around Yosemite for many, many years. Horses were involved in the original development of the park and should not be further limited by this plan!!!!

Topic Question 3: Camp Curry needs to keep the stables as it is part of the park's history!!!

Comments: Why does it always seem we have to defend the right to have and ride horses in the Park? Without them there would not have been a park.

Correspondence ID: 163 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No, trail redesign is too vague. Does the trail redesign plan include all users?

Topic Question 2: No, to eliminate commercial services that are crucial and is mandatory to sustain visitors is too vital to loose.

Topic Question 3: No, to eliminate commercial services that are crucial and is mandatory to sustain visitors is too vital to loose.

Topic Question 4: No, to eliminate commercial services that are crucial and is mandatory to sustain visitors is too vital to loose.

Topic Question 5: No, to eliminate commercial services that are crucial and is mandatory to sustain visitors is too vital to loose.

Topic Question 6: YES, expansion and retention of commercial services to acomodate visitor levels

Topic Question 7: Expansion and retention of commercial services reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave park to get those services. Removing the Auto Shop, it is MILES to the next one.

Topic Question 8: To remove a part of our American Heritage, horseback riding and rafting, come on. Obama and The Great Outdoors? Leave NO Kid INSIDE.

Topic Question 9: A more friendly environment for ALL visitors to expand their knowledge by actual horseback riding and rafting. Didn't Oprah come riding in Yosemite and get you good press? Think Teddy Roosevelt. How about NO CARS to care for the enviornment and take folks in horse & buggy. NOW that is good green care of Yosemite! Thanks uch

Comments: It seems more and more we, the people, are loosing access to our public lands and for those of us who work with National Parks, BLM & Forest Service providing Mounted Patrols, trail clearance, packing in ACE crews and CCC, fish plants and sometimes,just recreation, this is a national shame if we are not allowed to horseback ride or raft. And to take away vital

services to the visitors, that makes no sense. The closest store is already super expensive. Stop the cars coming in, forget the buses and go green with horse & buggy. Many of us would sign up and even volunteer for FREE to keep Yosemite CLEAN& GREEN. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Correspondence ID: 164 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 21:13:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Having learned of this at the last minute, I haven't had time to become conversant with all the details. And, I'm not a regular or lengthy visitor to Yosemite. However, a couple of thoughts based on a quick visit last summer: 1. Auto traffic - Reduced traffic is clearly needed, even if it means reduced visitors. 2. Services: - I agree with elimination of golf course, skating rink and services which are regularly available in areas where people live. - However, I think the stables provide a service often not available near where people live and horses are consistent with an outdoor experience with little land use or adverse impact. - Rafting, if I read the plan correctly, remains although I would think it would be a clear source of pollution and bank erosion. - Stores selling merchandise should be minimal - visitors can go to a mall at home.

Correspondence ID: 165 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Mather Saddle and Pack Station Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: If the plan is to reduce people's enjoyment and use of the park is the main goal, then Alternative 1-4 are right on.

Topic Question 2: No, definitely not.

Topic Question 3: Absolutely not. Eliminating or reducing horse use would be a huge mistake!!! a

Topic Question 4: Not a good idea at all. Many people enjoy the sights on horseback.

Topic Question 5: Do not eliminate or reduce commercial services , such as horseback riding in the Yosemite Valley.

Topic Question 6: Yes, horse back tours and riding need to be retained and maybe even expanded

Topic Question 7: I would prefer the idea in Concept 5 of expanding or at least retaining the stable's horse and mule tours

Topic Question 8: Eliminating or reducing horse and mule use concerns me greatly. What are you thinking?

Topic Question 9: Do not even consider reducing or eliminating horse and mule usage in the Valley. It is so much a part of present and historical Yosemite.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 166 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 21:19:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See below under comments

Comments: Only bits and pieces of each alternative plans do I agree with. It's much too hard to read and figure out all the info that is out there. Here are my feelings: Get rid of the "train wreck" Highland court, get rid of the temp. housing behind Degnan's and the post office and use the E.P.trailer court (already impacted area) for mixed housing. Leave Yosemite Lodge as is with the removal of Housing 1000's the cabins across the street from the bike stand, create more bike paths west end of the valley beyond Camp 4,encourage more biking, walking, hiking, shuttle bus riding, encourage hotels outside park to have their own transportation for their guests, with cost of entering the park as part of their park and visit promotions for Yose Park. Do not impact any place that hasn't had any building or paving ever, create parking outside park in outside communities. Do Not create parking west end of valley! Do not remove Sugar Pine Bridge or any other historic bridges, again, bikes and walking paths, the structure is already there.

We do need some sort of "group camping or picnicking" for all the large extended families that have been coming to the park in recent years. When they have 20 plus family members they impact the other visitors like you wouldn't believe, large groups have no sense of others personal space. But don't impact any area that hasn't already been impacted, perhaps take another look at the old group site area near backpacker's camp, or if the concessionaire stables are removed, group sites could be located there.

Where will all the $$$$ come from to do any of the changes?????????????!!!! It sure seems like big projects (Yosemite Falls) are

done and then there is never the $$$$ to maintain nor enough $$$$ to keep the facilities clean, yet we keep doing projects!!

In conclusion, less growth is the best solution!

"Don't fix what ain't broke"

Correspondence ID: 167 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: CSHA Traps Program Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No. Your idea is to restore the natural landscape of the park. But what I see is you putting in more parking lots and bike trails. Do you realize that bikes cause more damage to the land than horse hooves? But obviously the horse people don't PAY as much as the city bikers do so you are eliminating our facilities to cater to the rich city folk who come out to the park, stay for the day, litter like it is the city, take their pictures and go home. It is about money to you, not preserving the park, or keeping it open for the people who will actually appreciate it.

Topic Question 2: Again Concept one is all about closing the good parts of the park and laying pavement and more bike trails.

Topic Question 3: Again, you are eliminating trails and things from the park that provide those of us who actually care about the park from use. More parking should not be needed however if you are eliminating the number of users. That does not make any sense whatsoever.

Topic Question 4: Proposal three again eliminates all commercial horsebackriding and takes the stables away, making them campgrounds. If the proposed changes are to lower the amount of people treading on the grounds at Yosemite, why add campgrounds. Also campgrounds add trash, refuse from more campers, trampling of the ground, etc. Why take away a pass time that brings people pleasure to add to the destruction of the park?

Topic Question 5: This proposal also takes away riding....I am also concerned about the rafting and canoeing that y'all are taking away..that is part of the allure of yosemite. I think you are loosing your focus.

Topic Question 6: I actually don't have much of a problem with concept 6. The upping of use fees when things get tight is a supply and demand effort. The stables are left alone, and there is still canoeing on the rivers. okay

Topic Question 7: I agree that the park should be preserved, but do not penalize the people who do their best to keep things natural. Horse back riding is as natural as it gets. The horses are part of nature! We love to see things from their point of view. We take only pellets in and leave nothing. Don't take away our right to enjoy the park our way.

Topic Question 8: More parking lots. Paving over the ground. More camping sites are going to ruin the ground as well.

Topic Question 9: I think your limiting your guests is a good idea. I think you need to educate as well as tour.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 168 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of America and CA. Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes

Topic Question 2: Too restrictive, too limiting to visitors. Unfriendly to stock use.

Topic Question 3: Too limiting to visitors. Would remove the opportunity to see Nevada and Vernal Falls, let alone Little Yosemite Valley, for thousands of people who make the journey by horse/mule every year. Many people can't make that hike. There are also many high camps serviced by commercial packers that would suffer greatly. These first 2 alternatives would make Yosemite a very exclusive place, able to be visited only by the young and fit. And by those who can best use the technology to reserve the limited spaces available. Yosemite belongs to the public, not just the elite.

Topic Question 4: It appears that this alternative removes the stables, thus removing the commercial rides? See notes on #2, above. When we camped at Yosemite with our horses, we rented space at the stables, and thoroughly enjoyed our ride up to Little Yosemite Valley, and along the Merced river behind half dome. We also helped an injured hiker get back down to the valley floor, by putting them up on one of our horses for the return journey. I know this is not an isolated event. Again, this makes the upper trails only available to the young, fit and elite. Why make it so exclusive?

Topic Question 5: Seems to be a reasonable alternative. I didn't see any reduction in stable area or commercial stock use.

Topic Question 6: This also appears to leave Yosemite available to many different types of park users. This park belongs to Americans; let us leave it accessible to them, please.

Topic Question 7: 4 or 5. Unless there is something in those that restricts stock use.

Topic Question 8: 1,2 and 3 all make Yosemite's upper reaches accessible only to the fit and healthy. Even the valley gets much more difficult for those with physical limitations.

Comments: Please do not take out Curry Stables, or remove the commercial stock. These stable can be used by private parties, to board their horses, and I see no other alternative available. The mule rides make parts of Yosemite accessible to those less healthy or fit, or too young or old to hike the grueling trails. Why make it so exclusive? The last time we camped there with our private stock, we had an out-of-this-world ride up to Little Yosemite Valley, behind Half Dome, and along the upper Merced River. Coming back down, my husband walked so that an injured hiker could ride his horse back to the valley. That is a lot cheaper than calling in helicopters for twisted ankles. Thank you

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Correspondence ID: 169 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I want to see tax dollars go towards keeping the stock and equine activities active in the park and valleys. Use this money to make improvements for this use. There are to many areas that a being closed to these activities. They are a part of our history and need to be perserved. The loss of the revenue from these activities will impact the park and valley forever.

Topic Question 3: The loss of the stock and equine use in the Park and vallys mean the loss of the revenue from these activities that once removed will impact the park and valley forever.

Topic Question 8: If concept is to restrict stock and equine use what will be put in place? Mountain Bikes to do more damage? While some studies show they leave less impact no consideration is taken into account that stock and equine travel 10 miles to a bikes's 50 that relates to 5x the impact.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 170 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I say "NO". Curry Village needs to be kept open with equine rides available to the public. These animals are a major part of the Park's history. With our urban society there are few places for the American people to both enjoy the experience of riding and seeing these animals in use.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 171 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: please leve my river aone

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 172 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 21:59:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please don't close the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. What better place is there than the backbountry for visitors to gain a true appreciation and respect for this marvelous National Park? And where better to experience the backcountry than the High Sierra Camps? If you close Merced HSC you remove an essential part of the HSC loop, and take away the only chance many people have to enter into the true spirit of Yosemite. Not everyone can backpack. But everyone deserves a chance to visit the wilds of this one-of-a-kind park, and the HSC camps do just that.

Thanks!

Correspondence ID: 173 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, in varying degrees. The plans with the lowest numbers protect the river and natural resources but, in my opinion, all but eliminate the recreational values and opportunities for people to enjoy the park, including the river. Too much lodging, camping and facilities are removed for them to be feasible. The plans with the highest numbers allow for more recreational use and preserve more facilities, increase camping, preserve affordable lodging. They protect the natural resources, but not to the same degree.

Topic Question 2: I have multiple concerns with this plan: 1 Removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp-without this camp, hikers wouldn't be able to hike 'the loop' unless they were outfitted for and comfortable with solo backpack camping. Day hikers such as myself (and my 70 year old mother) love the option of day hiking our way through the high sierras, relying on the high sierra camps for bedding, meals and bathrooms. PLEASE leave the Merced High Sierra Camp intact. 2. Why does the Wawona Golf Course need to be removed? It's part of the historical Wawona hotel. 3. In my opinion, this plan removed way too much affordable lodging and camping. It seems that the Ahwhaneed would the the primary lodging remaining. I would prefer to see the Yosemite Lodge, Housekeeping Camp, Curry Village and all campsites remain.This would essentially make the park a day use only event and would increase traffic and polution.

Topic Question 3: I have multiple concerns with this plan: 1 Removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp-without this camp, hikers wouldn't be able to hike 'the loop' unless they were outfitted for and comfortable with solo backpack camping. Day hikers such as myself (and my 70 year old mother) love the option of day hiking our way through the high sierras, relying on the high sierra camps for bedding, meals and bathrooms. PLEASE leave the Merced High Sierra Camp intact. 2. Why does the Wawona Golf Course need to be removed? It's part of the historical Wawona hotel. 3. In my opinion, this plan removed way too much affordable lodging and camping. It seems that the Ahwhaneed would the the primary lodging remaining. I would prefer to see the Yosemite Lodge, Housekeeping Camp, Curry Village and all campsites remain.This would essentially make the park a day use only event and would increase traffic and polution. 4. I have concerns about the addition of the RV campground in the park. RVs are not well situated for the narrow, winding roads of the park. Additionally, large RVs add to traffic congestion, parking problems and block scenic views. I'd prefer for an RV campground to be located outside the park with shuttle service.

Topic Question 4: I have multiple concerns with this plan: 1 Removal of lodging and infrastructure at Merced Lake High Sierra Camp-without this camp, hikers wouldn't be able to hike 'the loop' unless they were outfitted for and comfortable with solo backpack camping. Day hikers such as myself (and my 70 year old mother) love the option of day hiking our way through the high sierras, relying on the high sierra camps for bedding, meals and bathrooms. PLEASE leave the Merced High Sierra Camp intact.

3. In my opinion, this plan removed way too much affordable lodging. The Housekeeping Camp is a great option for families and provides access to a portion of the river that is wonderful for swimming and rafting. Please retain all lodging as Housekeeping camp.

4. I love the additional sites at upper/lower river campground.

5. I have concerns about the addition of the RV campground in the park. RVs are not well situated for the narrow, winding roads of the park. Additionally, large RVs add to traffic congestion, parking problems and block scenic views. I'd prefer for an RV campground to be located outside the park with shuttle service.

Topic Question 5: 1. I like that this plan preserves the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. 2. I love the idea of expanding shuttle service to the West Valley. 3. I have concerns about the addition of the RV loop in the campground. RVs are not well situated for the narrow, winding roads of the park. Additionally, large RVs add to traffic congestion, parking problems and block scenic views. I'd prefer for an RV campground to be located outside the park with shuttle service.

Topic Question 6: 1. I love that this plan preserves the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. 2. I love the idea of expanding shuttle service to the West Valley. 3. I also like that this plan provides additional affordable lodging and more camping sites. In my opinion, camping is the best way to see Yosemite and most tent campers are respectful of and very conscientious stewards of the natural resources. 4. I have concerns about the addition of the RV loop in the campground. RVs are not well situated for the narrow, winding roads of the park. Additionally, large RVs add to traffic congestion, parking problems and block scenic views. I'd prefer for an RV campground to be located outside the park with shuttle service.

Topic Question 7: I like parts of Alternatives 4 and 5 the best: 1. Preserves the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. 2. Expanding shuttle service to the West Valley. 3. Provides additional affordable lodging and more camping sites.

Concerned about any additional RV camping.

Topic Question 8: 1 Removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp-without this camp, a large portion of the park becomes inaccessible except to overnight backpackers. 2. Removal of affordable lodging and camping. Makes the park unavailable to most low to moderate income families. Increases day use, traffic, congestion and polution.

Topic Question 9: 1. Provide more frequent shuttle service. 2. Expand shuttle service to Glacier Point, Wawona, Mariposa

Grove. 3. Provide permanent bathroom facility at the Swinging Bridge and Flatrock swimming holes in Wawona. 4. Retain Wawona Golf Course. It's an important part of the community there. Provides recreation and scenic beauty. 5. Retain all sites at Wawona Campground. 6. Retain stage coach rides/stable facilites at Wawona. 7. Also Wawona has a small dam upriver for resident's water supply. It is important to be able to keep that.

Comments: Regarding the items that apply to all alternatives, I am concerned about several things: 1. Removal of the Happy Isles Snack Stand-Clearly, whoever proposed this has never hiked to Vernal Falls, Nevada Falls or Half Dome and been saved by a cool drink or ice cream snack at the end of a long hot hike. As a parent, it's the thing that saved the hike for kids who were hot, tired and whiny but motivated to get their treat at the end. If it is a problem where it is currently located, could it be repositioned, farther form the river or closer to the Happy Isles Nature Center. I'd really be sad to see this eliminated.

2. Elimination of Wawona Stables-Horses have a significant historical value in Wawona. The location adjacent to the Pioneer History Center seems appropriate. My kids have grown up with memories of annual stage coach rides with Ranger Burl telling them stories about horses and stagecoach rides in the park. The ride is entertaining and has historical educational value.

3. Reduction of campsites at the Wawona Campground-I grew up camping at this campground every summer since I was 3 years old. Our family loves Wawona as it proves a peaceful haven even in the midst of the summer crowds. We hiked, fished and swam daily in the river. Our favorite sites were always the ones within a stone's throw of the river where we could hear it throughout the night. We were always good stewards of the sites, keeping it clean and animal proofed. Why do the sites need to be removed in order to protect the river? Adequate pathways can provide access while protecting the vegetation on the banks. I am also concerned about the reduction of campsites at Lower Pines and the Backpackers Campground.

4. I didn't really understand what you meant by 'repurposing' the Yosemite Village Sports shop, convenience shop and nature shop. Will these be eliminated? I hope not.

5. While commercial boating is proposed for elimination, will raft rentals still be allowed? Most people don't travel to Yosemite with their own raft, so it would be nice if they could rent one. Of course, commercial guides would also allow for rafting enjoyment for someone who has no experience and doesn't know what to do.

6. It was not clear to me why the Yosemite Lodge housing, Yosemite Lodge swimming pool, snack stand, Awhanee Tennis Court and former golf course needs to be removed? Can you please provide further explanation of why these are a problem?

Correspondence ID: 174 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Improving the stables at Curry Village is important to maintain the valuable experience and further provide the opportunity for people to ride horseback on the establish trails in the park.

Topic Question 3: Removing the Curry Village stables would diminish the outdoor experience for many people who visit the park. Stock use in the park is instrumental in providing access to many parts of the park that otherwise may not be accessible.

Comments: I have ridden my horse through out the park for many years. I cherish my experience and it saddens me that there are groups that want to eliminate the use of stock in the park. Please respect the equestrians public right to enjoy the park with their equine partner.

Correspondence ID: 175 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Los Angeles County Mounted Assistance Unit - Vice-President Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 22:05:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See comments below

Comments: As an equestrian for over twenty years, I am absolutely opposed to limiting or eliminating horseback riding in Yosemite Valley, or any other area of the park.Horseback riding allows people to have access to areas of the park that would not be accessible otherwise.

Our national parks were instituted in order for ALL people, not only from our own country, but from visitors from around the world, to be able to view our country's grandeur. Riding through the beautiful Yosemite Valley on horseback is park of our heritage and should never be taken away.

[redacted] Vice-President Marshall Canyon Mounted Assistance Unit Equestrian Trails Inc. [redacted] Los Angeles County

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Correspondence ID: 176 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. They are too general about Trail redesign and removal. Are the redesign plans for all users.

Topic Question 2: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 3: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 4: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 5: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 6: Yes, Expansion and retention of commercial services to accommodate visitor use levels

Topic Question 7: Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave park to obtain services.

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback riding. This service allows visitors to experience new adventures

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendly environment for all visitors. Allow them to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft trip or a horseback ride

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 177 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. They are too general about Trail redesign and removal. Are the redesign plans for all users.

Topic Question 2: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors

Topic Question 3: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 4: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 5: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 6: Yes, Expansion and retention of commercial services to accommodate visitor use levels

Topic Question 7: Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave park to obtain services. I do not like the portion of removing the Auto Shop

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback riding. This service allows visitors to experience new adventures and removing it would be detrimental to out doormen/women.

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendly environment for all visitors. Allow them to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft trip or a horseback ride

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 178 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No. Removing the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp takes away opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Topic Question 2: object to removing Merced Lake High Sierra Camp lodging and infrastructure

Topic Question 3: object to removing Merced Lake High Sierra Camp lodging and infrastructure

Topic Question 4: object to removing Merced Lake High Sierra Camp lodging and infrastructure

Topic Question 5: Object if High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure is removed and only backpackers' camp is retained; will not allow access to those who cannot carry heavy backpacks.

Topic Question 6: Object if High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure is removed and only backpackers' camp is retained; will not allow access to those who cannot carry heavy backpacks. Like preserving diversified visitor experiences

Topic Question 7: difficult to interpret plan recommend preserving Merced Lake High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure

Topic Question 8: Removing the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp takes away opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Topic Question 9: Preserving access to all High Sierra Camps and the Loop Trail, as a tradition in support of the National Park Service mission and as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Comments: My week trip in the high country going to the high sierra camps several summers ago was one of the highlights of my life. I have a different perspective of nature and man's relationship to it since then. I realized how we need to be stewards of the earth to preserve it. The high sierra camps give people who can not carry heavy backpacks the opportunity to learn from nature and spread the message to others.

Correspondence ID: 179 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: NO. The alternatives are not specific enough in regard to trail design and removal. Do the redesign plans apply to all users?

Topic Question 2: NO. This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services vital to visitors.

Topic Question 3: NO. This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services vital to visitors.

Topic Question 4: NO. This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services vital to visitors.

Topic Question 5: NO. This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services vital to visitors.

Topic Question 6: YES. Expand and retain commercial services to accommodate visitor use levels.

Topic Question 7:

Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave the Park to obtain necessary services..

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback riding. This service allows visitors to experience new adventures.

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendly environment for all visitors. Allow visitors to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft trip or a horseback ride.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 180 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 22:42:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: While I understand the need to balance use of this beautiful place, one of the very best ways to absorb it is on horseback. The creak of the saddle blends with the sound of the wind in the trees and pretty soon you forget about your iPhone.

That is a much-needed bubble of peace in this world.

Please consider that in your plans.

Correspondence ID: 181 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. They are too general about Trail redesign and removal. Are the redesign plans for all users?

Topic Question 2: I do not agree with this plan as it reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors

Topic Question 3: I do not agree with this plan as it reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors

Topic Question 4: I do not agree with this plan as it reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors

Topic Question 5: I do not agree with this plan as it reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors

Topic Question 6: Yes, Expansion and retention of commercial services to accommodate visitor use levels

Topic Question 7: Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave park to obtain services.

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback riding. This service allows visitors to experience new adventures. Commerical horseback riding is a tradition that has been enjoyed by many and it allows for new areas to be discovered.

Topic Question 9: Allow for visitors to expereince their time by horseback

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 182 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Only one proposal addresses keeping the stables. As an active park user for hiking, skiing and riding, it would be wonderful to keep access for horses and mules.

Topic Question 7: Keep the stables and riding in areas of yosemite

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 183 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Back Country Horsemen Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 23:12:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I want to say that proposal number 2 that wants to eliminate riding at the Curry Village Stables is not an acceptable proposal in my opinion. This takes away recreational choices from visiting park goers and also introduces the prospect of eliminating horse and mule activity altogether which is completely unacceptable. The parks are not just open to those who want to hike or backpack they are opened to all that want to enjoy the Parks. Most horsemen are responsible for their livestock and for caring for the land. The majority of people that ride in the back country are stewards of the land as much as those that hike or backpack and practice leave no trace riding. These lands are for the public and reducing or removing horses from the parks leaves a smaller group of the privileged few that can enjoy the land. Thank you for your consideration in this matter and I sincerely hope that the right and smart decision will be made.

Correspondence ID: 184 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, to varying degrees in each alternative. It is clear that river values and protection will increase, which is much needed. I hope that the goal to support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration are equally as important to the Plan. While preservation is essential to retain and enhance river health, it is also important to ensure that the

revised access opportunities are not merely restrictive. Future generations need to be afforded the opportunity to bond with this magnificent river so they will be inspired to sustain it for generations beyond.

Topic Question 2: This alternative is far too restrictive. It cuts out too much user capacity and removes too many campsites in Wawona.

Topic Question 4: I like "targeted riverbank restoration" within 150 ft of the river. I think the best option would be somewhere between Alternative 3&4. Add more parking and use levels and decrease camping from +57% for this Alternative.

Topic Question 5: I like the idea of not restricting peak use levels, but providing slightly more parking to ease the congestion. However, I think a 25% increase in camping capacity is too much. This may be the best Alternative if you do a bit more "targeted riverbank restoration", not just "essential restoration".

Topic Question 6: Please, please do not increase capacity this high. The sheer volume of people will detract from the experience.

Topic Question 7: I think all the traffic and congestion improvements are positive steps.

Topic Question 8: Entry stations also need to be included in the congestion planning and local residents need swifter access. More frequent shuttle service needs to be implemented and better maps and communication for transit opportunities. I am happy to hear you are planning to condense the NPS maintenance facility in Wawona and restoring the riparian area. Please do not consider moving this facility to any other location within Wawona. If relocating the facility is considered, it needs to be fully disclosed and vetted with Wawona residents and landowners. I am happy to see that tour bus parking/staging will be relocated from the Wawona store. However, neither of the roads through the town of Wawona can handle increased bus traffic. Moving the buses to Mariposa Grove or the entry station might be better alternatives. It is troubling that the Wawona Stables are proposed to be removed across all Alternatives. It is a historical and cultural gem that I wish could simply be relocated. However, I do understand that it is probably a major impact and hope you can communicate the reason behind this decision. The idea of removing bridges in the Valley is troubling, as they are heavily used. Often, accessing the river at areas of least impact (sandbars, etc) are only accessed by crossing bridges. If a bridge is removed, I would assume the sandbars will disappear. Thus, you may be creating a larger problem by forcing people to access the river at more sensitive points.

Comments: Thank you for your hard work on this plan. Although, for obvious reasons, the information provided has been Valley-centric, please be sure to communicate clearly proposals for the Wawona area. Restoration plans at the Wawona Golf Course is vague and needs to be better developed/communicated with community input before lumping in with individual Alternatives for the Valley. There are many people that care about Wawona that are not able to attend field trips to learn about what is proposed.

Correspondence ID: 185 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. They are too general about Trail redesign and removal. Are the redesign plans for all users.

Topic Question 2: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 3: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 4: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 5: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 6: Yes, Expansion and retention of commercial services to accommodate visitor use levels

Topic Question 7: . Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave park to obtain services. This is a no brainer. I do not like the portion of removing the Auto Shop

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback riding. This service allows visitors to experience new adventures

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendly environment for all visitors. Allow them to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft trip or a horseback ride

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 186 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 7: If the team has found ways to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of the Merced River in a way that allows for the enjoyment of future generations, and our populations are increasing, I encourage the team to carefully consider an alternative like concept 5.

Comments: As a Yosemite neighbor, I appreciate the National Park Service focusing development activities in the El Portal Administrative Site; uses for which it was designated.

I found details of different concepts distinctly lacking for the four river segments on the South Fork.

I do not encourage the National Park Service to remove facilities that are functioning well in their established locations far short of their service life. As infrastructure in important restoration areas deteriorates, I do encourage systematic relocation to more appropriate locations, whether within the established boundary of Yosemite National Park, the Admininistrative Site, or in available space in the gateway communities.

Thank you for encouraging concerned citizens to participate in the planning process.

Once a course forward is selected I hope that allocated resources are used prudently to bring realistic improvement to the patchwork of short-term fixes currently in Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 187 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 4: Re: Stock use. As per MRP Planning workbook, item 2, recreational user conflicts, it appears that in this case, as in many others, the only remedy's sugested are reduction or removal of stock on the trails. No where is the suggestion that we reduce the amount of hikers on common trails or even educate them on why stock is so important for trail maintainence. The suggestion that hellicopters are a viable alternative makes no sense. Cost, pollution, along with the noise and disruption caused. There are no volunteer hellicopters that I know of yet a large portion of trail support is provided by volunteer packers. It is also stated that the biggest complaint is manure concentration. When I hike or ride I constantly encounter droppings of all kinds. Bear scat, coyote and rabbit droppings to name a few. Yet no one complains about these. It makes me think of how folks will build around dairy farm knowing full well it's there then complain about the noise and smell and eventually drive it out. I hate to see this presidence set as we are already losing many trails to stock use.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 188 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Proposal #2: No; to take away the Curry Village Stables would be invaluable. This will encourage no stock to be used in Yosemite. This is historical and something everyone should experience in the beautiful national park of Yosemite. Stock does no harm to the environment. Leave no trace and gentle use programs are used by people who take stock into Yosemite.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 189 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Los Gatos Horsemens Assn. Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, especially the improvement of Stables in Valley Floor, riding is a great experience for many people both horse people and people wanting to ride beautiful horses from Yosemite Stables. KEEP STABLES and KEEP RIDING OPEN

Topic Question 2: NO DO NOT ELIMINATE RIDES in park valley floor. There is not problem with the way things are now, imrove stable and keep rides. WE take in new members young (children) and old every year more and more and they are new to horses and we often conduct rides with them in Yosemite and encourage them to go to see Yosemite on horseback.

Comments: OVERALL WE are very worried about the attitude of people against horses in Yosemite. This is apark open to equal access to ALL whether they hike, bicycle, ride a horse or paddle a boat/canoe. Horses have always been in the park and they provide a wonderful experience for countless hundreds every year. The notion that horses will be eliminated in valley floor or anywhere else in the park is NOT TOLERABLE. Balanced fair use by ALL not tyranny of any minority is what should be the most important theme by any plan. Not only is stock valuable in maintaining the park trails and backcountry, it is also an

important method of transport for some folks who might not otherwise be able to enjoy the wilderness or valley floor. KEEP Horses and Stables OPEN and VIABLE Thanks for your consideration

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Correspondence ID: 190 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Thank you for including the public at this stage of the planning process. The alternatives provide a broad range of solutions, and hopefully by incorporating public comments at this phase, additional solutions will emerge for both protecting the river corridors and allowing the public to continue to access and enjoy their park.

Topic Question 2: Limiting visitor access without even employing traffic management (ie Alternative 1 & 2) will unnecessarily alienate a substantial portion of the voting public. Especially if no apparent effort is made to increase bus options for visitors to enter and experience the park. This seems irresponsible in terms of allowing the public to access and enjoy their national park.

Topic Question 3: I don't see how re-purposing the Housekeeping Camp area to a day use/picnicking site would necessarily reduce the amount of trampling and erosion along the river area. People picnicking in that area will be tempted to go down to the water as much as those staying overnight.

Topic Question 4: I don't like the idea of creating a differential fee for parking in the east end of the valley. This is like creating a special valet parking system for those who have more money to access the best parking areas.

Topic Question 7: I like the idea of using traffic management techniques and increased public transit options to reduce the impact of vehicle/pedestrian conflict and effectively increase the capacity of the valley's existing roadways. Only if these techniques are not adequate to reduce traffic to an acceptable level should day use permits be implemented.

I like the idea of building additional boardwalks through sensitive meadow areas to allow users to access these areas without creating soil compaction issues or trampling vegetation.

I'm not sure that eliminating commercial services within the park - whether that is raft rental services or commercial stables facilities is the best way to mitigate those impacts. Concessioners can provide important touch points to educate visitors about ways to protect the resource - stop only on sandy areas etc. A system to limit the volume of visitors using commercial services, and also requiring the concessioner to provide funding and services to clean, restore, minimize impact to the riverways seems like a reasonable solution that accomplishes the goal of protecting the river corridor adequately, while still maintaining services for the public to recreate and enjoy.

Topic Question 8: Removal of Stoneman Bridge would eliminate one route of egress in the event of a rock fall or other emergency, potentially stranding any visitors in the east end of Yosemite Valley. From a safety/evacuation perspective, this bridge could be replaced, but not removed.

Removal of other pedestrian bridges in the valley could also concentrate foot-traffic on or next to bridges being used by vehicle traffic, possibly creating additional areas where there would be vehicle/pedestrian conflicts.

Checking for day-use permits on-site in the Valley would be prohibitively expensive in terms of requiring a large number of attendants to be present in all major parking areas all day, and that still wouldn't cover any road-side parking. This doesn't seem reasonable.

Increasing camping options will require additional measures to mitigate against poor air quality in the valley due to campfires. The air quality already presents an issue for asthmatics or other people with breathing difficulties in the entire east end of the valley in the summer.

Relocating and/or reducing infrastructure for public transportation operations, such as the concession increases the cost of operating these services even as we might hope to take advantage of public transportation to concentrate use and reduce the number of paved parking areas needed to accommodate visitors.

Topic Question 9: If substantial employee housing is relocated outside of the valley, and with it many park families, enrollment in the Yosemite Valley School is likely to decline even further. Are there options being considered to use that space for other purposes?

The housing in the Yosemite Village Archaeological Area is low density. Are the ways to increase the density of housing in that region to relocate facilities or housing options rather than requiring employees to commute from long distances - reducing air quality and increasing traffic and parking congestion.

I understand the need for a jail, but do we really need to have a courthouse in Yosemite Valley? Could these services be

relocated outside of the river corridor and that space used for other purposes?

In order to promote alternative transportation, I'd like to see additional biking options being created for the west end of Yosemite valley so that bicyclists can ride safely without impacting vehicle traffic flow.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 191 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:17:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: My only comment is in the elimination of the stables. It makes more sence to have people ride around the park on horseback than to have them poluting the air with auto exhaust. My last trip to the valley was as a teenager in 1959. We rode all over the place on bicycles which we rented there.

Correspondence ID: 192 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes and no. Three (#s 3, 4, & 5) of the five alternatives address part of the overall goal for the plan because they provide for public recreation by increasing the number of campsites in the Valley. Two alternatives (#s 1 & 2) do not address the overall goal of providing for public recreation since they do not increase the number of campsites in the Valley. Since the 1997 flood and the loss of campsites, it has been impossible to get campsite reservations from June to early-September. This plan needs to address this issue and add campsites in the Valley. The current, limited number of campsites are insufficient to provide for public recreation in the form of camping in the Valley.

Topic Question 2: This alternative should be eliminated from consideration. A reduction in the number of campsites is not acceptable.

Topic Question 3: This alternative should also be eliminated from consideration since it reduces the number of campsites in the Valley.

Topic Question 4: Second best alternative since it increases the number of campsites which will allow for increased recreational opportunities in the form of camping.

Topic Question 5: Not enough new campsites with this alternative.

Topic Question 6: This is the best alternative since it does the most to increase recreational opportunities in the form of camping.

Topic Question 7: Alternative 5 is the prefered choice. Camping opportunities need to be increased to allow more families to experience camping in Yosemite. It's the children who grow-up camping in Yosemite who will be the future stewards of Yosemite, and right now many families are not able to enjoy this experience due to the limited number of campsites. This is something that needs to be addressed in this plan.

Topic Question 8: Alternatives 1 and 2 will limit camping opportunities even more than they are currently limited. These alternatives should be eliminated from future consideration.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 193 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes, all five alternative concepts address the stated goals for this plan at different levels of commitment to river restoration and visitor use.

Topic Question 2: This alternative is too restrictive. It drastically reduces lodging and somewhat decreases camping opportunities, which are not going to be popular with the conventional Yosemite visitor. Besides it seems to favor certain visitors in detriment of others (i.e., day visitors and camping/ RV users over visitors that would stay in lodging facilities). This alternative also seems to promote day use visitation, which in my opinion causes more damage to the park resources than overnight visits. The day use permits and registration system for peak season visitation seem like good ideas, but they will likely backlash, and generate confusion about access to the Park in other seasons of the year. I understand this is a draft, and it was written to be as concise and comprehensive as possible, I appreciate this effort. With that said, I would like to point out that the

explanation for most of the site specify management actions were not clear enough to the average reader.

Comments on some site specific actions: #2 - Where is this "high density housing area" going to be located? #4 - It's too bad that this alternative eliminates the Lodge, reducing the lodging options for those who don't want camp or have recreational vehicles, camping gear or money to stay at the Ahwahnee. No commercial services at all? Not even a small "camping store"? It does not sound like a good idea, since the nearest store will be the Village Store to which most of the visitors are going to drive to get their groceries, regardless of public transit. #6 - The removal of Housekeeping Camp takes away one of the cheapest accommodations available to visitors in Yosemite, second to camping. Not everyone that is looking for a "camping experience" has a RV or camping gear. #10 - Curry Village can use some spacing between cabins to promote a less crowded experience, and remove accommodations from rock fall zone is a smart move. However, the proposed reduction in the total number of accommodations is very drastic and reduces the chances for relatively cheap lodging in Yosemite Valley. Again, not everyone looking for a "camping experience" has camping gear or recreational vehicles. #14 - By restoration of the Concessioner Stables and Merced Lake HSC do you mean total removal of facilities and services? I strongly disagree with removal of the Merced Lake HSC and consequently its supporting facility, the Valley Stables. I'm for reduction of services in both outlets, but not removal.

Topic Question 3: No comments

Topic Question 4: No comments.

Topic Question 5: This is my preferable alternative. It reached a balance between river system restoration and facilities/services available to the public. It seems to be the best alternative to accommodate future visitation to the park without being too restrictive.

Topic Question 6: No comments.

Topic Question 7: I prefer alternative concept 4. See answer to question 5 for comments.

Topic Question 8: In my view alternative concept 1 seems to be the most problematic one. See answer to question 2 for comments.

Topic Question 9: No comments.

Comments: I just have few comments to make on specific topics: Merced Lake High Sierra Camp: I support reduction of services at camp, but not its removal. In addition to reduction of capacity, consider elimination of showers to guests (showers will still be available to the staff). Consider the removal of the flushing toilets and replace them with composting toilets. Both actions would reduce water use and consequently reduce the use of the leach field. Valley stable operations: the most negative impact caused by the mules is related to the day rides, reducing the availability of day rides would reduce the impact on trails and the number of mules needed to be housed in the Valley. The mule trips to supply the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp could be made lighter with changes in the menu; and, if the camp capacity is reduced, it will consequently reduce the number of trips to the camp.

Correspondence ID: 194 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:34:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Get the horses and mules out of Yosemite. I'm an equestrian. I'm active in my local trails organizations. I ride my horses in many local parks and preserves. There does not need to be ANY stock in Yosemite Park. The stock serious degrades the park and causes far more harm benefit.

Correspondence ID: 195 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Board Member, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: For the most part yes--but I am most concerned that recreational opportunities that do not threaten water quality or harm the environment should not be limited. As an equestrian I have enjoyed the Curry Village stables--some of the language is unclear as to what the effect would be on future generations to have the same experience that I did.

Topic Question 2: This alternative mentions Restoration of the Concessionaire Stables area. Restoration is a great idea, but this alternative is vague on what the effect on the stables ability to offer an equestrian experience to enable visitors to experience Yosemite would be affected. I am all for restoration, but it has to be done in a way that does not limit the opportunity for those who will get the most out of their park experience on horseback to do so.

Topic Question 3: Unlike Alternative 1, this one is quite specific--it eliminates commercial day rides, thus denying people who are not up to more strenuous hiking, including juniors and seniors, the opportunity to experience the trails and vistas of

Yosemite a bit further from the trailheads. This seems like the most draconian of all the alternatives on this aspect.

Topic Question 4: This one promises that "Concessionaire Stables area re-developed as new campground with ~40 drive-in sites" --which sounds a whole lot like removal of the stables. Yosemite has a long tradition of enabling an equestrian experience for its visitors, and this should not be abolished..

Topic Question 5: Unless I am missing it, this plan does not mention the stables at all. If I am missing it, you should be able to guess where I stand on changes--changes to enhance the equestrian experience in Yosemite are good ones; changes that eliminate or restrict it should be avoided.

Topic Question 6: Unless I am missing it, this plan does not mention the stables at all. If I am missing it, you should be able to guess where I stand on changes--changes to enhance the equestrian experience in Yosemite are good ones; changes that eliminate or restrict it should be avoided.

Topic Question 7: The restoration of stables in alternative 1 might be most preferable--if it is done to enhance without limiting the opportunity to get on a horse and out into the park. Otherwise the lack of action on the stables in Alternative 4 and 5 would be best.

Topic Question 8: The redevelopment of the Curry Stables as a campsite in Alternative 2 creates the concern that it would eliminate the ability of many people to experience those parts of the park that are beyond a limited distance from trail heads.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 196 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The alternatives address the goals of the plan but they do not address the issue of maintaining riding stables in the valley. Horseback riding is an excellent, natural way to be able to see the park without using mechanical gas-guzzling conveyances. This is how visitors through time have seen the valley. Please retain the riding stables and preserve this means of transport.

Topic Question 2: Do not prefer this alternative, it calls for removing stables. They need to be retained.

Topic Question 3: Do not prefer this alternative, it calls for removing stables. They need to be retained.

Topic Question 7: None -- the only sensible alternative would be one that would allow retention of the stables.

Topic Question 9: Yes, retain the stables in Yosemite so that future generations will be able to ride through the valley.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 197 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 07:26:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: This is so wrong!!! Horses and mules are our legacy on which our forefathers founded this country and Yosemite Valley. Horses and mules are the heart and soul of Yosemite. How dare these people (who I doubt are environmentalists at all, but instead foreign corporate city dweller investors that would prefer to cement the trails up that they only want to use to hike and bike on anyway) try to remove our American heritage from our American park!!!!

Keep the stables and trails for horses and mules to use, and not share the same trails with bikers or hikers. This is a very bad idea to remove horses and mules from Yosemite. This tears the heart and soul out of the love we have for this area. It is like destroying the spirit, dedication and hard work our pioneer ancestors put into settling this state and valley. Do not take away the beautiful west coast California real American history of a national treasure such as Yosemite, by removing the mules and horses.

Correspondence ID: 198 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry horseman of washington state Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 07:47:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: we would like for all trails to be left open in the park that are open to stock use to be kept open for stock use. for the mules and horses in the park to be kept in the park for others to enjoy the wilderness to be seen aboard horse back or mule. Do not close the park to outside use of horses or mules in the park from private persons wanting to enjoy riding the trails in yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 199 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Private Citizen Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Want horsebackriding available in Yosemite.Because of physical handicaps (feet) cannot walk far. Need to ride a horse.

Comments: Because of very bad foot problems,I cannot walk around Yosemite Park and the back country.I cansit in a saddle,however, and view its majesty tha tway. Please do not deny me this opporutnity.

[redacted].

Correspondence ID: 200 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Back Country Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No.

Topic Question 2: No.

Comments: Surely there are alternatives to simply eliminating the commercial packing. Are there other means to protect our environment that still can allow access?

Correspondence ID: 201 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: La Canada Trails, Walnut Creek Mounted Unit Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 08:16:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I do not think the removal of horses at Curry stables is in the best interest of the park visitors and will not accomplish anything helpful. Horses have been in Yosemite for decades , why all of a sudden the rush to remove them? I have visited Yosemite and the horses don't do the damage that I have seen from hikers and visitors who seem less civilized every time I visit.

Correspondence ID: 202 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horseman Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not completely since eliminating the stables in Curry Village would deny that recreational experience to visitors.

Topic Question 2: Loss of the Curry Village Stables would be a violatin of the National Historic Preservation Act! For as long as visitors have been coming to Yosemite they have had the pleasure of riding a horse if they so chose. In many cases this is the only opportunity for physically challenged visitors to see certain areas that the can not see from a car so it would also potentially violate the American Disablity Act.

Topic Question 3: Remodeling the stables is the preferred alternative if the remodel is done within the confines of SHIPO so that the historic integrity of the structures is not lost.

Topic Question 4: No comment

Topic Question 5: No Comment

Topic Question 6: No Comment

Topic Question 7: Between Alt 1 and Alt 2 I DEFINATELY prefer #2.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 203 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of Calif. Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 08:26:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am a concerned citizen who not only enjoy our parks by foot but also by horseback. I urge you to please consider those who enjoy our beautiful trails by horses and mules. Horseowners are responsible environment loving people who care about our trails. The organization Backcountry Horsemen of California are people who truly care about the parks and the

education of gentle use on the land is one of its mottos. Please do not eliminate our use of trails.

Correspondence ID: 204 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 08:26:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Closure of ANY horse facilities in the YOSEMITE valley is not what the American public want. Horse people need to have access to public and and private stables and corrals so they can enjoy mountain trails like any other visitor. Plans for closure are against the American way of life. A few people are infriging on the rights of others for political reasons which are not jutified.

Correspondence ID: 205 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: BCHC Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: This is the second submittal of my comments. This is the correct one!

Topic Question 2: This is the preferred alternative...please see comments mistakenly supporting Concept 2 on the earlier submittal!!!

Topic Question 3: I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS CONCEPT. PLEASE REFER TO COMMENTS LISTED IN EARLIER SUBMITTAL AS RESPONSE TO CONCEPT ONE.

Topic Question 7: I SUPPORT ALTERNATIVE ONE...DO NOT REMOVE STABLES!!!

Comments: COMMENTS SUBMITTED IN AN EARLIER E-MAIL MISTAKENLY SWITCHED NUMBER ONE AND NUMBER TWO. I FULLY SUPPORT KEEPING THE CURRY VILLAGE STABLES AND i AM VEHEMNETLY OPPOSED TO ITS REMOVAL!!!!!

Correspondence ID: 206 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: This one is my preference because it suggests upgrades to the horse stables.

Topic Question 3: My least favorite because it suggests elimination of some rides at the Curry Village Stables.

Topic Question 7: Keep horses in the Park!

Comments: Horseback riding in the park gives a unique experience to people who would otherwise not be able to get out on the trails. Many people also consider a horseback trip a "bonus" to their experience.

Correspondence ID: 207 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Jamul Trails Council Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No on proposal #2

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 208 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Please do not restict access to equines as discussed under this proposal. Restricting trails to equines is bad policy.

Comments: I would love to ride take a horse riding vacation in this treasure. Please don't restrict the equine trails. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 209 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Nature Conservancy, AAC, Access Fund,..... Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: As far as I can judge. Certain exceptions noted below.

Topic Question 2: Too restrictive. Would lose too many lodging sites by removing Yosemite Lodge, and too many camping sites - camping sites should be made compatible with floods. The river is classed recreational in the Valley, and I believe it can handle much more traffic and use than this allows, while maintaining flow and water purity. You don't talk about how to get day use permits - costs, timing, ...

Topic Question 3: still too restrictive re lodging - need to encourage extended use vs day use; it improves the ratio of traffic to experience. You don't talk about how to get day use permits - costs, timing, ...

Topic Question 4: Best of the available options. Your concept does not explain how you will collect parking fees for East Valley parking, and send overflow to El Portal. Presumably stations will be set up as 120 drops to the valley floor, diverting traffic there? Does this mean that all other parking besides East Side lots will be closed? Or only that once enough cars are in each day, newcomers will be rerouted. Will road or other construction be needed there? Where will the payment for parking be made? Currently people with passes, or people already in residence cruise in and out. WIll that add to delays the entrance stations? Drop commercial paddling. I'm not sure I understand why the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is closed under this scenario. Is it judged unsustainable without the stables?

Topic Question 5: Too limiting of visitor access; unnecessary limitations on El Cap Meadows, West Valley parking is a major mistake. It appears to be a place to dump cars and keep them out of the high traffic areas. If so, dump them outside the Valley, rather than bringing them in to be useless there. The whole approach of boosting day visits will convert too many people to 'drive-thru' visits (maybe bus through) visits. A regular Disney World tour experience. Avoids what I see to be easy. 'low impact' restorations - parts of Housekeeping Camp, stables, Camp Six. Why are Sugar Pine and Awahnee bridges remaining in this concept?

Topic Question 6: Too limiting of visitor access; unnecessary limitations on El Cap Meadows, West Valley parking is a major mistake. It appears to be a place to dump cars and keep them out of the high traffic areas. If so, dump them outside the Valley, rather than bringing them in to be useless there. The whole approach of boosting day visits will convert too many people to 'drive-thru' visits (maybe bus through) visits. A regular Disney World tour experience. Avoids what I see to be easy. 'low impact' restorations - parts of Housekeeping Camp, stables, Camp Six. Why are Sugar Pine and Awahnee bridges remaining in this concept?

Topic Question 7: Best is concept three. Road improvements for traffic are out of my expertise. I approve of limiting commercial uses of the valley, with the exception of providing food. If we need to limit people, limit those who come to shop or be entertained in ways that are not closely related to the natural world there. I don't understand why the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is closing under some scenarios and not others. I think it should remain open

Topic Question 8: West Valley Parking. West Valley parking is a major mistake. It appears to be a place to dump cars and keep them out of the high traffic areas. If so, dump them outside the Valley, rather than bringing them in to be useless there. El Cap Meadows fencing and boardwalks - not necessary with user limits similar to today, boardwalks worse than the current situation Any substantial reduction in overnight capacity (failures to use flood plain for camping purposes)

Elimination of roadside parking and pullouts - will further concentrate use in time and space, will severely impact users of the valley periphery - hikers, climbers, fishermen . Elimination of bicycle concession. The Valley might as well be designed for bicycle use.

Topic Question 9: Consider subsidized or free bicycle supply in the Valley, on various Dutch or other urban experimental programs.

Try taking lodging reservations for the Lodge rooms and for the cabins, and then upgrading to the Awahnee by lottery on arrival. Fill all Awahnee rooms that way.

Comments: I would like to comment on the Alternative concepts in the Merced River plan. I am an East Coaster, yet I have been there over 10 times, from July through November. I admit I am not familiar with Wawona or El Portal.

Issues of importance to me

Increasing number of camping spaces - chronically short for the last decade-plus; lowest impact, able to withstand flooding which more permanent structures will not - affecting both themselves and the river.

Maintained number of lodging spaces - given the demographic profiles of the next 20 yrs, it would affect quite a few people to significantly lower lodging spaces. Minimization of commercial use - I approve of the elimination of commercial rafting and horseback riding, and note that you discuss the repurposing of the Sports shop in the introduction, but do not describe it in any of the concepts. Unlike Tuolumne, which has a high population of thru hikers who may be in need of supplies and/or repairs, the valley is most likely an end point. And for a backpacker, a bus ride could take him out of the valley to a presumably lower

impact area.

It is clear from the bear problem that public food serves a good purpose in the Valley. Making everyone carry, store and cook food would be ugly. But if access to the Valley needs to be limited, we should be sure to strip out uses of the Valley which are not strongly attached to the properties of the Valley. Hiking, climbing, sightseeing and soaking in both the soaring grandeur and the quiet beauty is what is most important here. Learning the natural and human histories is also positive. But floating the Merced is just another way to see the Valley - one which requires additional car/bus trips to the beginning and end of the float. Similarly, shopping opportunities, while they will be missed by many, are not in any way a property of the Valley, and, indeed, can be satisfied in hundreds of thousands of locations around the country. If visitation must be limited, let us attempt to exclude those with trivial reasons for visiting first.

Lastly, the suggested West Valley parking area strikes me as a bad idea. I know you've put more thought into this than I can, but I dislike the idea of bringing a whole bunch of cars into the valley, then dumping them in the middle of 'nowhere' from a commercial point of view - ie no stores, food, hiking trails, etc. The most attractive thing there is El Cap Meadows, for which you are considering various access restrictions. Yet this proposed parking area is not "in the middle of nowhere", it will be force feeding more human 'contamination' into a relatively unused part of the central Valley. I predict that enough people will cross the street to visit El Cap Meadows, or just head in that direction, to cost you a big chunk of your traffic advantage right there.

Concept 3 most closely meets the objectives I describe above. Maintenance of lodging, increased camping, decreased peak usage.

I oppose the suggestions in Concepts 4&5 to fence off El Cap Meadows and place boardwalks.. By limiting the peak usage, I feel that the current conditions there will be acceptable. I have failed to notice significant degradation over 20 years. They are hiking trails (a perfectly normal use) which divide and disappear as people disperse. The boardwalks would be much more visually intrusive than these trails. I am sure that some minimal maintenance or rotational resting program would be adequate.

There are two other topics I have heard about, but did not see scanning the workbook.

A suggestion to remove all roadside parking: as a climber, I disagree with that. It seems unlikely to me that there will be adequate bus service in the foreseeable future - frequent coverage for at least 18hrs/day. This applies to many hikers as well - those who wish to enjoy the beauty of early morning rambles may well wish to be on the way at first light, those who overextend themselves happy to get back before 9, in hope of a cooked meal. The use of the minor trails can be expected to drop as well, concentrating use yet more into bus served areas, only during bus served hours. A large fraction of climber's parking and car travel is outside the peak times, and less concentrated in the high traffic areas than the typical user's travel.

A suggestion to remove the bicycle rental concession. The Valley is ideally suited for bicycle transportation. You should be encouraging it as much as possible. In fact, it would seem to be a good place to try a free bicycle program, like the Dutch have been experimenting with. The theft rate would be relatively low - bicycles would in general have to be taken apart and a sheet sacrificed to the grease gods in order to sneak them out of the valley.

Correspondence ID: 210 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: BCHC Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 10:04:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Vote no on #2

Please continue to allow equestrian use in the Park.

Correspondence ID: 211 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: BCHA, Folsom Lake Patrol, Amer. Rvr. Pkwy Ptrl, San Mateo Co. Parks VHP, Golden Feather Riders, etc. Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Do NOT remove commercial stock rides from the park. They are historic, thrilling, and the way the park was first visited so many years ago. They make the park more accessible for those who are elderly, handicapped, or too young to hike.

Topic Question 4: Do NOT remove Curry Stables! (See above feedback.)

Comments: It was very hard to find the Alternative Concepts and respond due to the separate format. In the future, would it be possible to have both the Concept and the Response on the same page so they can be viewed together on our computer monitors?

Please, please don't eliminate the ability of visitors to ride horses and mules in Yosemite Valley and other areas. Our nation was developed with stock, and no other means of transportation allows as comfortable and thorough ability of ALL citizens to enjoy our parks and wilderness areas.

Correspondence ID: 212 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: BCHC Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No ! Are the redesign plans for all users? The plan seems to be to general in scope.

Topic Question 2: No! This plan would reduce or restrict visitors use by eliminating commercial services

Topic Question 3: No! This would reduce or elminate commerical services vital to visitors.

Topic Question 4: No! This would reduce or eliminate commercial services vital to visitors.

Topic Question 5: No! This would reduce or eliminate commercial services vital to visitors.

Topic Question 6: Yes! This would be benifical by expansion and retention of commercial services to accommodate visitors at all levels.

Topic Question 7: Concept 5. By expanding or retaining commercial services this will reduce the neccesity of visitors to leave the park to obtain services

Topic Question 8: Bad idea to remove the commercial rafting and horseback riding as this allows visitors to experience new adventures

Topic Question 9: By working toward a friendly environment for all visitors this will allow them to expand their knowledge of experience the joy of a raft trip or a horseback ride

Comments: The parks were created for all people to use and enjoy. Reducing or eliminating commercial services in the park will reduce the use to only those that are young and physically fit. I have enjoyed the park system since a young man. Now that I am approching 70 I still enjoy the parks but I am not physically able to do what I could do 20 or 30 years ago so I need the commercial services that are provided. To reduce or eliminate the commercial services within the park wkould be a great injustice to all and a big black mark to the Park Service.

Correspondence ID: 213 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. They are too general about Trail redesign and removal. Are the redesign plans for all users.

Topic Question 2: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors

Topic Question 3: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 4: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 5: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 6: Yes, Expansion and retention of commercial services to accommodate visitor use levels

Topic Question 7: Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave park to obtain services. This is a no brainer. I do not like the portion of removing the Auto Shop

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback riding. This service allows visitors to experience new adventures

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendly environment for all visitors. Allow them to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft trip or a horseback ride

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 214 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: bchc Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: would like to see continued use of stock allowed. do not want stables closed. visitors should be allowed a full and well rounded experience of the area

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 215 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: ETI, BCHC, Mill Creek Riders, ApHA, AQHA, APHA Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Eliminate item 14. Any futher restrictions on stock use in the National Park System / National Forests is an offense to the creators of the National Parks. Equines have been a part of these areas throughout recorded history. The presence of stock in the park & back country enhances the experience of most visitors, even if they don't choose to ride or use them as pack animals, it's part of our heritage.

Topic Question 3: Eliminate item 16. Any futher restrictions on stock use in the National Park System / National Forests is an offense to the creators of the National Parks. Equines have been a part of these areas throughout recorded history. The presence of stock in the park & back country enhances the experience of most visitors, even if they don't choose to ride or use them as pack animals, it's part of our heritage.

Topic Question 4: Eliminate item 13. Any futher restrictions on stock use in the National Park System / National Forests is an offense to the creators of the National Parks. Equines have been a part of these areas throughout recorded history. The presence of stock in the park & back country enhances the experience of most visitors, even if they don't choose to ride or use them as pack animals, it's part of our heritage.

Topic Question 5: I favor this alternative.

Topic Question 7: Alternative 4.

Topic Question 8: see questions 2-4

Comments: Horses & Mules have played a vital part in the formation of the trail systems that allow all visitors to access our great resource, OUR National Parks & National Forests. They continue to provide access and recreation for some who may not otherwise visit the back country / wilderness. They are vital tools for trail maintenance as well. To further restrict stock use in these areas would be a travesty.

Correspondence ID: 216 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: BACK COUNTRY HORSEMAN Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. They are too general about Trail redesign and removal. Are the redesign plans for all users.

Topic Question 2: This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 3: This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 4: This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 5: This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 6: Expansion and retention of commercial services to accommodate visitor use levels

Topic Question 7: Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave park to obtain services. This is a no brainer. I do not like the portion of removing the Auto Shop

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback riding. This service allows visitors to experience new adventures

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendly environment for all visitors. Allow them to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft trip or a horseback ride

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 217 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of CA, Equestrian Trails, Inc., Morongo Basin Horsemen's Assoc. Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. Are design plans for all users?

Topic Question 2: NO

Topic Question 3: NO

Topic Question 4: NO

Topic Question 5: NO

Topic Question 6: YES

Topic Question 7: Concept 5

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendly environment for all visitors. Allow them to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft or a horseback ride.

Comments: Good afternoon, after being raised to love and appreciate the outdoors, and being fortunate enough to have been taken to many of the national parks throughout the western US many times over, I've got to say that my love of horses came from my first experience on a pony, at Yosemite NP, when I was 4 yrs. old. I even remember his name, "Diamond".

Throughout my childhood, whenever I would spot someone on horseback, often a ranger in a national park such as Zion - it was always such a thrill to see a horse, sometimes I even got a ride which I will never forget.

When I was 12 my dad and I rode rental horses in the Tetons, and Zion. Two years ago we rented horses at Red Canyon, near Bryce NP in UT, and my UK cousin got to see the beautiful red rocks from horseback, and she loved it. These are memories I still carry with me today, and always. I have even brought my own horses to the Sierras several times, and it is such a wonderful experience to be able to do that. I had many positive encounters with hikers there, as they thought it was so neat to see horses, and even asked to photograph me on my horse so as to add interest to the mountain background. They even asked if they could hitch a ride, just kidding around. Children shriek with joy at the sight of a horse, as I did, and I am always happy to let them come and pet them. Then the parents usually have a story to tell about themselves and it's always so nice to take the time to chat with people, especially if they're from another country.

Back Country Horsemen and other dedicated individuals seek to continue to enjoy the wilderness as much as any other user group. Understanding the need to maintain the trails, many equestrians are ready to roll up their sleeves and do what is necessary to preserve and protect these cherished resources.

Please keep in mind that riding horseback not only helps the economy within the park, such as pack stations and rental stables generate, but also allows those with disabilities and the elderly to enjoy the backcountry as much as anyone else. The wilderness should not only be enjoyed exclusively by young, fit day-hikers.

Thank you for your time and please consider how sad it would be if horses and mules were not allowed in the national parks any longer. Kids would miss what I have seen and never get to experience the beauty and nature of these animals. Most kids think cowboys and cowgirls are pretty cool too!

Happy trails to you, and would love to hear what you would have to say regarding this matter. Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 218 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Sonoma County Horse Council Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. They are too general about Trail redesign and removal. Are the redesign plans for all users.

Topic Question 2: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors

Topic Question 3: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 4: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 5: Definitely a "No" This plan Reduces or eliminates commercial services that are vital to visitors.

Topic Question 6: Yes, Expansion and retention of commercial services to accommodate visitor use levels

Topic Question 7: Concept 5. Expansion and retention of commercial services will reduce traffic by not requiring visitors to leave park to obtain services.

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and horseback riding. This service allows visitors to experience new adventures

Topic Question 9: Work toward creating a friendly environment for all visitors. Allow them to expand their knowledge by experiencing a raft trip or a horseback ride

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 219 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: AMC, AAC Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: As far as I can tell.

Topic Question 2: Too restrictive. Would lose too many lodging sites by removing Yosemite Lodge, and too many camping sites - camping sites should be made compatible with floods. The river is classed recreational in the Valley, and I believe it can handle much more traffic and use than this allows, while maintaining flow and water purity. You don't talk about how to get day use permits - costs, timing, ...

Topic Question 3: This is still too restrictive regarding lodging - need to encourage extended use vs day use; it improves the ratio of traffic to experience. You don't talk about how to get day use permits - costs, timing, ...

Topic Question 4: Best of the available options. Your concept does not explain how you will collect parking fees for East Valley parking, and send overflow to El Portal. Presumably stations will be set up as 120 drops to the valley floor, diverting traffic there? Does this mean that all other parking besides East Side lots will be closed? Or only that once enough cars are in each day, newcomers will be rerouted. Will road or other construction be needed there? Where will the payment for parking be made? Currently people with passes, or people already in residence cruise in and out. WIll that add to delays the entrance stations? Drop commercial paddling. I'm not sure I understand why the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is closed under this scenario. Is it judged unsustainable without the stables?

Topic Question 5: Too limiting of visitor access; unnecessary limitations on El Cap Meadows, West Valley parking is a major mistake. It appears to be a place to dump cars and keep them out of the high traffic areas. If so, dump them outside the Valley, rather than bringing them in to be useless there. The whole approach of boosting day visits will convert too many people to 'drive-thru' visits (maybe bus through) visits. A regular Disney World tour experience. Avoids what I see to be easy. 'low impact' restorations - parts of Housekeeping Camp, stables, Camp Six. Why are Sugar Pine and Awahnee bridges remaining in this concept?

Topic Question 6: Too limiting of visitor access; unnecessary limitations on El Cap Meadows, West Valley parking is a major mistake. It appears to be a place to dump cars and keep them out of the high traffic areas. If so, dump them outside the Valley, rather than bringing them in to be useless there. The whole approach of boosting day visits will convert too many people to 'drive-thru' visits (maybe bus through) visits. A regular Disney World tour experience. Avoids what I see to be easy. 'low impact' restorations - parts of Housekeeping Camp, stables, Camp Six. Why are Sugar Pine and Awahnee bridges remaining in this concept?

Topic Question 7: Best is concept three. Road improvements for traffic are out of my expertise. I approve of limiting commercial uses of the valley, with the exception of providing food. If we need to limit people, limit those who come to shop or be entertained in ways that are not closely related to the natural world there. I don't understand why the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is closing under some scenarios and not others. I think it should remain open.

Topic Question 8: West Valley Parking. West Valley parking is a major mistake. It appears to be a place to dump cars and keep them out of the high traffic areas. If so, dump them outside the Valley, rather than bringing them in to be useless there. El Cap Meadows fencing and boardwalks - not necessary with user limits similar to today, boardwalks worse than the current situation Any substantial reduction in overnight capacity (failures to use flood plain for camping purposes) Elimination of roadside parking and pullouts - will further concentrate use in time and space, will severely impact users of the valley periphery - hikers, climbers, fishermen Elimination of bicycle concession. The Valley might as well be designed for bicycle use - expand it.

Topic Question 9: Consider subsidized or free bicycle supply in the Valley, on various Dutch or other urban experimental programs.

Try taking lodging reservations for the Lodge rooms and for the cabins, and then upgrading to the Awahnee by lottery on arrival. Fill all Awahnee rooms that way.

Comments: As a climber, I disagree with any suggestion to remove all roadside parking. It seems unlikely to me that there will be adequate bus service in the foreseeable future - frequent coverage for at least 18hrs/day. This applies to many hikers as well - those who wish to enjoy the beauty of early morning rambles may well wish to be on the way at first light, those who overextend themselves happy to get back before 9, in hope of a cooked meal. The use of the minor trails can be expected to drop as well, concentrating use yet more into bus served areas, only during bus served hours. A large fraction of climber's parking and car travel is outside the peak times, and less concentrated in the high traffic areas than the typical user's travel.

I oppose the suggestions in Concepts 4&5 to fence off El Cap Meadows and place boardwalks.. By limiting the peak usage, I feel that the current conditions there will be acceptable. I have failed to notice significant degradation over 20 years. They are hiking trails (a perfectly normal use) which divide and disappear as people disperse. The boardwalks would be much more visually intrusive than these trails. I am sure that some minimal maintenance or rotational resting program would be adequate.

Correspondence ID: 220 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Equestrian Trail Riders Action Committee Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not really. I have concerns regarding eliminating trails and redesign. Will they be for all users, hikers, bikers, and equestrians? Where can people pulling a horse trailer park and camp?

Topic Question 2: This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services. Many visitors don't or can not bring their bikes or canoes there or horses. I am particularly thinking of out of state tourist that come to see Yosemite.

Topic Question 3: This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services. Many visitors don't or can not bring their bikes or canoes there or horses. I am particularly thinking of out of state tourist that come to see Yosemite.

Topic Question 4: This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services. Many visitors don't or can not bring their bikes or canoes there or horses. I am particularly thinking of out of state tourist that come to see Yosemite.

Topic Question 5: This plan reduces or eliminates commercial services. Many visitors don't or can not bring their bikes or canoes there or horses. I am particularly thinking of out of state tourist that come to see Yosemite.

Topic Question 6: Please keep the commercial services available to the visitors, so they can get out and see and enjoy the park. By getting out on the trails, waterway, you get a different appreciation of the majesty of the park.

Not everyone can carry the "toys" with them, so they should be available in the park. ie ski slopes have ski shops/rentals for people.

Topic Question 7: By keeping the commercial services available, people do not have to go outside the park. The park was make money from the commercial services.

Topic Question 8: Removing the commercial rafting and in particular the horseback riding. People forget that the horses/packers help with keep the trails wide enough for the hikers.

Topic Question 9: The parks should be available for all users. There are many ways to have your experience and the commercial services assist many people.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 221 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: ETI Corral 37 Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes i am in general in favor of all the reduction of camping and lodging in the park. Reducing the number of automibiles on the road and promoting bussing and limiting the number of entrents is the only method to preserve the park.

Topic Question 3: I am not in favor of eliminating commerical 'day rides' in the park. To view the park on horseback is how the park was originally accessed. There is no better way to see the park than on horseback as it is a minimal foot print on the land and far less damage than by foot. As a board member of our local ETI Corral I am in favor of maintaining the equine way of life

both locally and in Yosemite

Comments: I would increase access to the park via horseback more than is currently the case. To view the park in the way our forefathers came to the land is a far more enriching experience than any other.

Correspondence ID: 222 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 11:38:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Hello,

I am submitting a few comments regarding the Merced River Plan. My background is that of an active climber for 20 years, a commercial rock climbing guide for 3 years, former president of the New River Alliance of Climbers for 3 years, and an active member and instructor for the Colorado Mountain Club.

I do not feel at this time that I can comment on the entire plan but I do wish to submit some key perspectives on improvements or changes to Camp 4.

I'll skip any comments on the historical relevance of Camp 4 and climbing's impact on park prestige and attraction. These factors are well documented and well known. I will instead stress the importance of taking changes to Camp 4 very seriously as it impacts national and international interests. Also, I believe that making changes to this resource requires a collaborative and engaging process with the climbing community and other parties in interest and that any changes to the physical infrastructure should involve volunteer participation from any interested group. This will facilitate ownership of the facilities and promote effective stewardship.

Before proceeding with other comments I wish to establish a base line for the attitudes that may effect the future of collaboration between the climbing community and the park service when it comes to camp 4 any any other climber specific resource in the park. While the park has made a great effort to accommodate climbers I still believe that there is a great deal of tension and frustration. I also believe that Camp 4 is at the center of that issue. I believe that improving Camp 4 and the issues that exist will vastly improve the aforementioned tension and potentially reign in a new era of ownership and stewardship.

Much of the tension between climbers and the park with regards to Camp 4 specifically are related to infrastructure conflicts. By this I mean to say that the facilities themselves, and the nature of its layout, materials, management, access etc?are a direct cause of much frustration. While Camp 4 has all the basic necessities, those necessities fall victim to the "Over promise, under deliver" situation. There is a high demand for use but the facilities themselves fall short in a variety of ways:

1) Restroom facilities - This issue needs serious attention. From an impact standpoint these facilities could be converted to composting toilets and rain/ snow water collection if desired or simply an expanded network of traditional facilities.

2) Dish washing - Again 1 point is not enough. Multiple dish washing areas will reduce impact or people tending to these needs at their campsite thus impacting ground water and river conditions.

3) Parking - This is a MAJOR issue and one that needs serious consideration before any expansion of any kind takes place. Currently the dismal nature of the parking is a big frustration for users. Currently it is an inadequate dust bin. Parking needs to be commensurate with the volume of sites and there needs to be (multiple if expanding sites) distinct loading areas. I would go as far as to say that if the philosophy is you have to have a campsite to park there then number the spaces, 1 or 2 spaces per campsite #. Also, the rest of the park has standard paving and therefore surface water management and runoff, this parking area should be commensurate with other parking areas in the park.

4) Site layout and materials - The camp sites themselves could use a real overhaul to reduce impact and increase usability. Raised tent pads that can accommodate the number of tents allowed per site. More clear divisions between sites. Campsite posts to handle registration tags.

5) General layout - Reduce impact on soil and vegetation by having natural areas that are off limits to foot travel. Also creating natural devisions and more privacy between sites.

6) Changes to Camp 4 should increase values of personal ownership and stewardship within the climbing community and any other party in interest.

I believe that all the above issues need to be addressed before proceeding why any physical changes to the infrastructure. If not addressed we will have a situation with more impact, more frustration and less personal ownership and stewardship of this very unique and important resource.

Thank you.

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 223 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Fresno-Kings County Cattlemen's Association Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: NO

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 224 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Sierra Club Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Overall, I'm impressed with the work that has gone into preparing this document. It has great maps, charts, diagrams and the text is clearly written and easy to follow. I appreciate that the public has the opportunity to offer comments at this fairly early stage. That said, it's hard to evaluate and compare the alternatives without an explanation of the science, analysis and rationale behind each one. I appreciate that NPS seems to be taking its mandate seriously about protecting the outstanding river values and includes plans for restoration of lands along the river corridor in all alternatives. I suppose that including all of the analysis and rationale at this stage is not the norm in the EIS process but it's really hard to evaluate and compare without it. For that reason, I'm not able to provide feedback on the various alternatives. I look forward to seeing the analysis and rationale in the DEIS.

Comments: The potential impacts on the ORV's of increased visitation due to changes in transportation systems (regionally, within the park, and within the Valley) don't seem to get much attention in this document but they could be huge and have to be managed appropriately. Please fully evaluate these impacts in preparing the DEIS. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 225 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: ETI, Inc. & Back Country Horsemen Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I just logged in in my computer so I have not had the chance to view your proposals. It is very unfair that the government wants to eliminate/reduce the use of public lands to equestrians. Please!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!ALLOW THE ENJOYMENT TO HORSEBACK RIDING IN PUBLIC LANDS, i.e. Yosemite. The stables in Yosemite are a great asset and attraction. Also, PLEASE!!!!!!!! EXPAND THE OPPORTUNITY TO CAMP WITH HORSES IN YOSEMITE, MAMMOTH, AND OTHER PUBLIC LANDS. THE ELDERLY AND THE HANDICAPPED ESPECIALLY BENEFIT BY BEING ABLE TO ENJOY NATURE, THE SITES, ETC. ON HORSEBACK.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

[redacted]

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 226 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Please do NOT eliminate horseback riding from Yosemite! it is a part of the history of the park, and has minimal impact on the environment. it is certainly more natural and historic than bicycling, and that seems to be acceptable. Please continue the traditional use of horses to ride through the park; it enables many people to experience a piece of history, and appreciate how things were done in the early days of the park

Topic Question 7: I prefer that park-goers still have some choices of different ways to see the park, including being able to ride horses in the park

Comments: Please keep horses in the park!

Correspondence ID: 227 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: HUMANE OBSERVER Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: No on proposal no. 2. i.e., we want horses and riding to continue. Do not close the stable and the equine access to the park.

Thank you.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 228 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am NOT in favor of reducing or eliminating any stables or stock use in Yosemite. My BEST experiences in the Park have been from horseback. Horses and mules allow visitors to experience areas of Yosemite that they otherwise might not be physically able to visit and also allow visitors to see Yosemite as early visitors to the park did. Horses and mules leave less of a footprint than vehicles and access areas that only can be accessed by either foot or air. I'd rather see a string of mules carrying equipment for repairing a trail or slide than have to listen to the chopping sound of helicopter blades in a National Park.

Topic Question 3: Our National Parks are a treasured resource for the PUBLIC! The valley floor should be open as it is to allow for people who cannot take a backpack into more remote areas. What you are proposing is as our population increases, to decrease the access to Yosemite for the public so that fewer people can experience the beauty and wonder that is Yosemite. I find it interesting that the Merced River Plan's byline is Providing Access (and Protecting Resources). Why don't you just say, Merced River Plan....Reducing and eliminating access for some -- there's more truth in that statement.

Topic Question 4: Again: Why do we want to reduce Equestrian Access by reducing or eliminating commercial horseback rides? Many people ride a horse for the first time in Yosemite and it is an experience and memory they carry with them for the rest of their lives. The first time I rode a horse in Yosemite, I imagined that I was part of the group with President Roosevelt in 1903, discovering how beautiful Yosemite was and knowing that the Public MUST be able to experience the beauty and not limit access to just a favored few.

Topic Question 5: Just why do your concepts want to eliminate recreation businesses in the Park? The rafting and equine commercial operators provide valuable services at a price that the National Park system could not match. Park visitors use these services to enhance their experiences in Yosemite as well as other National Parks. Stop trying to do away with opportunities for differing experiences in the park. Keep the menu choices of activities for visitors broad.

Topic Question 6: With our increased population, I support the relocation and expansion of camping areas to more resilient locations. I also would support the use of technology to show real-time traffic so drivers can plan better to avoid delays. I do not support the reduction or elimination of any of the current commercial operations (golf, rafting, equestrian, ice rink, tennis, etc.).

Comments: After visiting Yosemite, President Roosevelt said "It was like lying in a great solemn cathedral, far vaster and more beautiful than any built by the hand of man."

Cathedrals are not built to be empty edifices, they are created to be gathering places to elevate the spirit. Please do not reduce the number of people who will be allowed to visit Yosemite. It is a magical place that needs to be experienced, a place that makes humans feel awe and wonder.

Correspondence ID: 229 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Various portions do, but some elements I believe do not.

Topic Question 2: I think Yosemite Lodge should remain. Housekeeping Camp should definitely be totally removed. The Valley Stables should remain. Concessioner offices should be removed from the Valley. NPS Admin building should also be removed or changed to a museum.

Topic Question 3: I think Yosemite Lodge should remain. Housekeeping Camp should definitely be totally removed. The Valley Stables should remain. Concessioner offices should be removed from the Valley. NPS Admin building should also be removed or changed to a museum.

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Topic Question 5: I think Yosemite Lodge should remain. Housekeeping Camp should definitely be totally removed. The Valley Stables should remain. Concessioner offices should be removed from the Valley. NPS Admin building should also be removed or changed to a museum.

Topic Question 6: I think Yosemite Lodge should remain. Housekeeping Camp should definitely be totally removed. The Valley Stables should remain. Concessioner offices should be removed from the Valley. NPS Admin building should also be removed or changed to a museum.

Topic Question 7: Alternative 2, but Yosemite Lodge should remain in entirety, and the Valley Stables should remain. Housekeeping Camp must go! Concessioner offices should be removed from the Valley.

Topic Question 8: Removing portions or all of the Yosemite Lodge is not good, as it makes it much more difficult(expensive)for people who don't camp to stay in Yosemite. If you want to encourage people to try the Park who don't have familiarity with the outdoors, it has to be recognized that not everyone who may like the Park is into camping. Especially people raised in an urban environment.

Topic Question 9: NPS Admin building should also be removed or changed to a museum. Why do officeworkers need to work in an office in the Valley? They could work in El Portal. It's not even ADA accessible. Eliminate these officeworkers commuting and clogging roads to go into the Park. I think the Valley Stables should remain as horseback riding is a traditional way for people to move around a Park. Not everyone can hike the places the mules go. It is a traditional experience. Housekeeping Camp should definitely go. It is an eyesore. If places are desired for people to stay, make it a campground, or a much more limited area for standard tent cabins. Just not those horrible looking makeshift units! They are a disgrace to the Park!

Comments: I think my responses in question 9 covers it. However to repeat: NPS Admin building should also be removed or changed to a museum. Why do officeworkers need to work in an office in the Valley? They could work in El Portal. It's not even ADA accessible. Eliminate these officeworkers commuting and clogging roads to go into the Park. I think the Valley Stables should remain as horseback riding is a traditional way for people to move around a Park. Not everyone can hike the places the mules go. It is a traditional experience. Housekeeping Camp should definitely go. It is an eyesore. If places are desired for people to stay, make it a campground, or a much more limited area for standard tent cabins. Just not those horrible looking makeshift units! They are a disgrace to the Park!

Correspondence ID: 230 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Generally.

Topic Question 2: Too restrictive, and violates the Organic Act's (and Stephen Mather's intent) to make parks accessible to all.

Topic Question 3: Better, but still too restrictive.

Topic Question 4: The best proposal, although the idea of increased fees is discriminatory in favor of those now called the 1%, and against middle class working families with children who should be a major target audience of the NPS.

Topic Question 5: Some sections of this alternative are ok, but the increase in campsites in Concept 3 is more desireable. Again, increased fees are a concern.

Topic Question 6: Too unrestrictive, does not solve the problem.

Comments: This only came on Tuesday, so these ideas are somewhat rushed. With more time there would be better ideas.

The operating philosophy here is that of the Organic Act and Stephen Mather, which encourages appropriate visitation in the national parks. However, driving into Yosemite and wandering around wearing iPods and spending all one's time in restaurants is not appropriate use, so there does need to be some management of Valley visitation.

The planning document is generally well- thought through. The third and fourth alternatives seem best -- for one thing, they ease change in, always the best way to go. The campsite increase in 3 is more desirable, however.

But the idea of increased fees, whether for transportation or differential use, are bad ideas -- they discriminate against the very people the park service needs to attract, the working middle-class family campers. (Mather once wrote "I consider fees to be only a temporary alternative until congress adequately funds the parks" because he realized fees restrict visitation to the rich.) A transportation fee is ok, as long as it is properly implemented.

The big problem here is the swarm of day-trippers during the summer. None of the suggested alternatives really deal with that, but the solution is simple and there are easily accepted models in existence. If you consider Disneyland, say, there is no day-use parking allowed within that park; parking is in satellite structures and transport to the park, included in the parking fee, is by shuttles. This is the model that Yosemite should adopt for day use.

Day use vehicles should not be permitted to enter Yosemite, at least in peak seasons. Parking should be in structures or lots in El

Portal (and similar areas on 120 and 412). A modest parking fee should include shuttle bus transport to the park. For logistical reasons, the park visitor fee should be included with the parking/shuttle fee -- and it might be at a reduced amount as a one-day only pass.

Campers and lodgers, who need to haul equipment and baggage, should be allowed to drive into the park. There are some logistical issues here -- how does the entrance station ranger know those folks are really camping? -- but solutions can be developed with some thought. This is not a problem for reserved campsites, since the visitors will have documentation, but more challenging for non-reserved. However, with some thought, the national park service and its friends can surely come up with a suggestion. One idea is to charge the full entrance fee for campers, which will discourage day trippers from fibbing about camping since they will be able to pay a lower fee for one-day use. (Please note that this is NOT an argument for turning all campsites into reserved sites -- in fact, there are some real issues with reserved sites for us.)

If all day users were to park outside, pay a reasonable fee for parking and shuttle on the Disney model -- partly offset by a reduced one-day only entrance fee -- the problem of vehicle crowding in the Valley would be significantly reduced, and the visitor experience -- enjoying the view as the shuttle takes them to the Valley rather than fighting traffic -- would be significantly enhanced. Many of the other issues here would be partially resolved along the way, since there would less need for parking, bridges, etc, in the Valley. People would buy into this, and it would not discriminate against struggling middle class families with kids.

One other comment: "outstandingly remarkable" is very poor English usage, and with no intention of disrespect to the author, I'd suggest a good writer come up with a much better phrase. But that's a nitpick.

Correspondence ID: 231 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Tilden Wildcat Horseman's Assoc. Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Okay as long as stables and riding access are preserved.

Topic Question 2: Curry Village stables should be preserved. It is unclear what is going on in this concept.

Topic Question 3: No on getting rid of day rides or destruction of the stable in any form. Stables are a connection with history and the past and the horseback experience is unique and should be preserved. It is living history for everyone to experience and connect with the land and history of our country.

Topic Question 4: This is the worst as it sounds like turning equestrian facilities into campground. There are many campgrounds and few stables. The stable and riding should be protected and preserved as it is living history and increasingly hard to find. This is one way for those who could not have their own horse can still have the wonderful experience of riding.

Topic Question 5: No on destruction or restrictuion of the stables for any other activity.

Topic Question 6: No on anything that would destroy or restrict the equestrian stables and ability to have day rides. This is living history. We don't need more camp grounds etc.

Topic Question 7: I and many I have spoken to support keeping the stable and improving it. Day rides should be available and our wonderful history and ability to connect to the land on horseback should be preserved. There are things you can see on horseback that are not available in other ways of seeing the park. Even the local animals relate differntly to people on horseback versus hikers. This allows people to see things that are priceless and inspire love of the land and protection of it. Horses are living western history and access to them and riding in the park should be cherised and preserved.

Comments: Preserve the stable!!!! Preserve access to horses and horseback riding to those who would not otherwise be able to have that experience.

Correspondence ID: 232 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Your Alternative concept severely limits the use and capacities of public property. Yosemite Valley is public property with access to ALL, not the elite few who get in on the quota. Over night accomadetions and commercial activities should not be regarded as un needed. Commeercial users utilize safe and environmentally sound practices under permit and should not be removed or restricted. The park should allow commercial services as needed by the public. Alternative concept 2 and all others that limit or exclude user groups should be abandoned and re addressed.

Comments: Your Alternative concept severely limits the use and capacities of public property. Yosemite Valley is public property with access to ALL, not the elite few who get in on the quota. Over night accomadetions and commercial activities should not be regarded as un needed. Commeercial users utilize safe and environmentally sound practices under permit and should not be removed or restricted. The park should allow commercial services as needed by the public. Alternative concept 2 and all others that limit or exclude user groups should be abandoned and re addressed. Why are Oak trees being watered by drip

line. If they die then they die and decompose back into the ecosystem. Why put a number on the amount of visitors who can visit their National Park on any particular day? Why are you wasting tax payer money to serve the elitist user groups and not practice conservative principles and serve all.

Correspondence ID: 233 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Please do not elimate any rides at Curry Village stables. They all offer access to the beauty of the area especially good for those who do not or cannot hike but can ride.

Comments: Looking at the various maps and concepts what is glaring in it's absence is the lack of icon horse signs indicating horse access. As a person who loves our parks and loves seeing them on horseback I think that is a very bad "sign". Our parks... entire United States have a lot of "horse back history" since that is the way all areas were first viewed. To eliminate anything horse related is to deny that history and disallow a large group of outdoors loving people access to tax payer property. That is wrong and you should be sure your "new" concepts include the horseback public too.

Correspondence ID: 234 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: American Endurance Ride Conference (A.E.R.C.) Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: With the exception of Concept 1, I do not believe the the addition of 40 RV sites in any way addresses the goals.

Topic Question 2: This is the only acceptable alternative because there is no increase in RV sites, and the stable will be restored.

Topic Question 3: Same as above, but in addition I would object to the elimination of commercial day rides.

Topic Question 4: No. Additional RV site are not appropriate.

Topic Question 5: No. Additional RV sites are not appropriate

Topic Question 6: No. Additional RV sites are not appropriate.

Topic Question 7: I prefer Concept 1. There will be no additional RV sites, and the stable area will be restored

Topic Question 8: More RV sites. I don't want to be hiking and smelling diesel exhaust at the same time.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 235 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Alternatives address the goals, but exceed the WSRA mandates.

User capacity section was well written.

Some factual listings may be incorrect or misunderstood - removal of 6% of accommodations at a total of 70. Narratives state 30 from Housekeeping Camp and 70 from CV (tents and cabins).

Biological resource conditions information in the work book do not note that current conditions exceed baseline studies due to NPS management practices and specific projects implemented to protect resources. Workbook language infers human activity has had a negative impact, but does not give NPS credit, nor readers the benefit of understanding resource management programs implemented since 1987 actually improving certain conditions.

Topic Question 2: To restrictive to the average visitor. Refer to the River Values Baseline Condition Report starting on page 2-29 illustrating visitor survey results for recreational activities. This alt might eliminate access to certain types of visitors challenged with socio-economic concerns, physical disabilities, non-English speaking, senior citizens, etc.

One might say is sets up a visitor profile that is uber-environmentalist, and not the average person wanting to enjoy their national parks.

Topic Question 3: Also too restrictive on recreational use & removal of services.

Topic Question 4: Wondering why commercial rafting is OK in Alt 3, but removed in alt 4? More camping needed.

Topic Question 5: Commercial rafting should be included in this Alt 4 as an acceptable recreational activity since it can be managed by the operator to control visitor activities while rafting on the river such as a controlled put in and take out point, safety information including a river "sweep" at the end of the day, environmental info regarding beach access and restricted segments, litter collection, providing restrooms and mass transit back to the river put in, etc.

More camping needed.

Topic Question 6: User capacity with day use reservation system for the 68 days at peak visitor use should be a required program with this Alt. This alt meets WSRA mandates, however more meadow restoration should be included.

Topic Question 7: I prefer a combo of alt 4 & 5, and support day use permitting for limited amount of days in the peak visitation period.

Topic Question 8: Alt 1, 2, and parts of 3 seem too restrictive and eliminate, re-purpose and relocate visitor services, parking, and campgrounds that should remain to accommodate visitor needs along the recreational segments of the Merced River.

Topic Question 9: Test out an day use limit system before implementation on the 4th of july 2012 or 2013.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 236 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Please reconsider the reduction or elimination of horse and mule rides through our beautiful yosemite . This is the "people's" land and to enjoy This breath taking views and experiences should not be tampered with. This is another freedom that I find unimaginable to lose. There is No argument strong enough to move in this proposal. Respectfully [redacted] How fondly I remember a wonderful trip with my dear mother in law and others on mules

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 237 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: USFSVA, Backcountry Horsemen Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The alternatives do address some aspects of the stated goals, however, there is a rather startling omission in that the alternatives seem to seek removing the Wawona stables and possibly the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. The second of the stated goals of the Merced River Plan is to "support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River and its unique values as a place of cultural, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration". I do not think removing the stables accomplishes fully this statement. The stables provide opportunities for people to access the river corridor in a very special and inspirational way. This was the main way of travel for many of the explorers in the region. To be able to experience the park in this manner is quite unique, to notice not only what you can see with your own eyes, but what you can see through the horses eyes as well. To think that riding astride your mount and looking up at the great vastness of this beautiful park and imagining yourself back in time, perhaps viewing the park as the early explorers did, is beyond compare.

Topic Question 2: Too restrictive.

Topic Question 3: Too restrictive.

Topic Question 4: Too restrictive.

Topic Question 5: Probably acceptable with the addition of keeping the stables and the High Sierra Camp, as I see no mention of these two things.

Topic Question 6: Probably acceptable with the addition of keeping the stables and the High Sierra Camp, as I see no mention of these two things.

Topic Question 7: I prefer keeping the park open and accesible to as many people as possible. This park is owned by us. That being said, it is wise to make sure that the park is maintained so that people do not overrun things. But there truly is a happy

medium between the extreme view of most enviromentalists who want nobody there, and others who want full and open access.

Topic Question 8: Any of the alternatives which propose closing down an area, restoring the habitat and moving what was there, seems unneccesary. If you already have a situation where something is or has been damaged by overuse, leave it alone. Don't move the problem elsewhere and then create damage there as well. Some areas of damage will never come back, just let the use occur there, don't move the use. It will be very hard to get people to break old habits and not use areas they are used to using already. They will use the new areas and continue to use the old areas out of habit. Then you will wind up with even more damage than you were trying to correct. You do not have enough rangers to police the entire park.

Topic Question 9: While I applaud the fact that elimination of all stock use on hiking trails has been dismissed from further analysis, the Wawona Stables should be kept open and active. I do not know who runs the stables but it should be run by a non-profit. Perhaps the number of animals and trips could be regulated, perhaps they already are. But elimination of the stables altogether is unreasonable. I had a very good friend who was a burn victim. His only access to the outdoors was to get on a horse. It took three of us to get him on, but once he was on, it was great. I run into so many kids these days that have not even seen or touched a horse. What better place to be able to do this in such a wonderful environment. The concept "leave no trace" was invented by a horseman. The horse is a historical figure in the park and so instrumental in its development and maintenance, please keep the Wawona stables open.

Comments: While the Merced River Plan is obviously a thoughtful, detailed and needed review, it is missing a major component. The Wawona stables are slated to be closed and this is unreasonable. There do not seem to be any alternatives offered to keep the stable open. The Merced River Plan does not give any information on the stables whatsoever that I could find, other than it will be closed. Why would it be considered for closure? Need much more information on this. As I said in my answer to Question #9, the horse is an historical figure in the park and so instrumental in its development and maintenance. I do not know who currently manages the stable, but I am sure some other measures could be taken to alleviate concerns of those wanting to eliminate it short of closing it. I run into so many kids these days that have not even seen or touched a horse. They absolutely marvel at me when they see me riding down the trail. What better place to be able to access riding a horse in such a beautiful environment. Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 238 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Fullerton Recreational Riders, Oregon Equestrian Trials Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The horseback riding at Wawona, Bridal Vail and Toulaume is the best in the entire world. Because the there are only a few sites you have to be the very first caller to get a reservation. Many people speed dial for a rservation. In years past I even had friends call from the east coast to get a reservation. The sites are well regulated. If anything there should be moreequestrian opportunities in Yosemite Park not less. It is improtant to know that manure is just grass and water, which is unlike doggy residue. Unless you know this you "Don't know shit" :)

Topic Question 2: Please keep the exisitig equestrian sites open. The equestrians have been in the Park well before its inception by John Muir. It has a historical quality. I know that the environmentalists don't think that anyone but them should be allowed in the Park. We have already lost so many camp sites it is pitiful.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 239 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: designworks florals RVWR RVVA LFR and many other riding organization Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yosemite, having been there at least once annually for over 50 yrs, is best seen close up AND as close to nature as you can possibly get. Being over 50 means I can't go as long or as hard as I used to ---but with my horse--or a rental horse My family and I can still see the relatively untrammeled side of my favorite place on earth.

Please don't cut this out of our lives.....

Thank you, Lisa

Topic Question 2: NO PLEASE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 240 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Rock Creek Pack Station Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Proposal #2 is bad in that it gets rid of horse and mule riding in Yosemite Valley. The stables and the public they serve are a historic part of the Park.

Once you get rid of all the cars and buses maybe you could consider eliminating other services.

Comments: Stock use is an important part of the Yosemite experience. Continued access to the wilderness is essential for those who want to travel by a horse or a mule. And, in the non-wilderness areas the public desires to have the opportunity to see the Park on the back of a saddle animal.

The vocal few continue to try and get rid of livestock in the Merced River drainage. They will say and do about anything to achieve their goal of making Yosemite free of saddle and pack stock.

Keep stock travel available for the public.

Correspondence ID: 241 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I support concept #5 for the most campsites to be added.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 242 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes

Topic Question 2: I vote NO

Topic Question 3: I vote NO

Topic Question 4: I vote NO

Topic Question 5: I vote NO

Topic Question 6: I vote YES

Topic Question 7: We believe the retention of the horses and mules in the valley is very important to the ongoing enjoyment of visitors to the park.

Topic Question 8: Any alternative that reduces or eliminates the use of horses or mules within the park.

Comments: The Backcountry Horsemen of California want to express our concern about any changes to the current recreational use of the Park by stock users and commercial stock organizations that operate stock operations within the Park. We believe that stock use is one of the most enjoyable activities that visitors to the Park can achieve, as the experience of riding a horse or a mule in the great west of the United States by visitors from all around the world.

Those who imagined and relished the establishment of a Park were transported through this beautiful area by horse or mule. The Park was built with the help of these animals. Stock use in the Park is a very historic activity that should never be denied or restricted.

We ask that no action be taken to change the current activities of stock use in the Park as it would have a highly negative effect on the public's ability to enjoy the Park to its fullest.

Correspondence ID: 243 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 16:02:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I have reviewed the plan for the Yosemite wild rivers act and I want to convince you that the Merced River High Camp serves a far greater purpose to connect the Sierra High Camps and to encourage enjoyment of the Tuolumne Meadows area than it would serve to help the wild rivers act. I understand the thoughts behind closing it. I am an avid environmentalist and nature lover. However, I think that the people trying to close it, though they mean well, are trying to accomplish a good thing in a bad way. I was lucky enough to do a 5 day high Sierra Camp trip with Ranger Dick Ewert last year and can truly say that it was one of the best experiences I have ever had. It was also an experience that I would not have done if I did not have the

option of staying in the High Sierra Camps each night. I tend to hike alone, but do not feel comfortable camping alone. I could not have imagined how really wonderful the camps are, though. The staff, my fellow campers and hikers, and the Rangers all contributed to make it an amazing experience. I can not say enough about the comfort and the meals. In addition, I was able to ask any questions I might have and learned quite a lot about Yosemite from Ranger Dick during the hikes and at the after dinner talks. There is no doubt in my mind that the staff and Rangers do everything they can to reduce the impact that we and they have on the river. I believe that closing Merced Lake would be a mistake and ask you to please carefully weigh the good it would do with the greater amount of bad.

Correspondence ID: 244 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: self Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Topic Question 2: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Topic Question 3: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Topic Question 4: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Topic Question 5: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Topic Question 6: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Topic Question 7: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Topic Question 8: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Topic Question 9: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Comments: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSC are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise. Merced HS is the largest of the camping, and for many people is there favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Correspondence ID: 245 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: CONCEPT 1 IS UNACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 3: CONCEPT 2 IS UNACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 4: CONCEPT 3 IS UNACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 6: This is best alternative for the following reasons -It increases the badly needed camping sites -It increase valley lodging inventory -It RETAINS the beautiful bridges -It increases badly needed valley parking capacity

Comments: Since moving to California in 1969, our family has visited Yosemite many times, mostly camping with our children and with friends. We have hiked the many trails throughout valley, up to Mirror Lake and the Vernal and Nevada Falls. We have also seen the continual effort to restrict the use by families of the wonders of the Park

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Correspondence ID: 246 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite Foundation Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 16:11:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please maintain the HighSierra Camp loop. There is NO BETTER OR MORE MEANINGFUL WAY for families, including young adults and teens, to be educated about the majesty of the wilderness in general and the importance of preserving Yosemite in particular. Our family is eagerly anticipating this coming summer's trip to Glen Aulin. PLEASE KEEP THE LOOP! Thank you for your consideration of my very strongly felt comments! Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 247 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 16:12:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I understand the need to maintain or make adjustments to the wilderness aspect or status within the park. I believe it would be a narrow minded mistake to remove the Merced High Sierra Camp or any of the other camps. The camps allow more people to experience the back country and come to understand the value of parks and the preserved back country. In this era of tight resources, budget cutbacks, and challenges on many fronts, it is important to view the High Sierra Camps as a valuable PR tool. The experience of spending time at any of the camps is invaluable in persuading more people in the value of the parks. A park with only wilderness status back country will only cater to a very small minority and will be seen as such a small segment being served. Thanks for listening.

Correspondence ID: 248 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: CONCEPT 1 IS UNACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 3: CONCEPT 2 IS UNACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 4: CONCEPT 3 IS UNACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 6: Alternative 5 is the best for the following reasons -It increases the badly needed camping sites -It increases valley lodging inventory -It RETAINS the beautiful bridges -It increases badly needed valley parking capacity

Comments: Since moving to California in 1969, our family has visited Yosemite many times, mostly camping with our children and with friends. We have hiked the many trails throughout valley, up to Mirror Lake and the Vernal and Nevada Falls. We have also seen the continual effort to restrict the use by families of the wonders of the Park

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Correspondence ID: 249 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: CONCEPT 1 IS UNACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 3: CONCEPT 2 IS UNACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 4: CONCEPT 3 IS UNACCEPTABLE

Topic Question 6: Alternative 5 is the best for the following reasons -It increases the badly needed camping sites -It increases valley lodging inventory -It RETAINS the beautiful bridges -It increases badly needed valley parking capacity

Comments: Since moving to California in 1969, our family has visited Yosemite many times, mostly camping with our children and with friends. We have hiked the many trails throughout valley, up to Mirror Lake and the Vernal and Nevada Falls. We

have also seen the continual effort to restrict the use by families of the wonders of the Park

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Correspondence ID: 250 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes. The concepts will help restore the Merced River to its natural state, and enhance the visitor experience.

Topic Question 2: Although the most restrictive for overnight visitors, it maintains the Lodge for day use and meeting rooms for visitors and programs, but removes older rooms which are scattered around the lodge among parking lots which are not now a very attractive location. It removes rooms from the flood plain.

Topic Question 3: Leaving some rooms at the Lodge is not attractive given their location in the floodplain

Topic Question 4: Leaving overnight rooms at the Lodge is not attractive given their location in the floodplain. Parking is not significantly reduced which is necessary if the experience for visitors is to be improved. The traffic diversion concept sounds expensive and difficult to administer and likely requires more remote parking inside the Park.

Topic Question 5: This alternative is in effect keeping improvements and visitor numbers as allowed currently with only modest restoration efforts. The Park needs more restoration and limits on visitors arriving in private vehicles. The traffic diversion concept sounds expensive and difficult to administer and likely requires more remote parking inside the Park.

Topic Question 6: This alternative increasing user capacity and overnight lodging may allow more visitors but will degrade the Park experience even more given the overuse during the peak periods.

Topic Question 7: Alternative 1 will do the most to enhance the day use experience for visitors. I especially like the summer permit system for private vehicles to avoid congestion and ensure parking will be available for those with permits.

Topic Question 8: Adding new lodging and planning more than current peak visitors while possibly a popular alternative will degrade the Park experience.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 251 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: CSERC Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 17:05:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE THAT IS ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY FEASIBLE

CSERC does not claim to have all the expertise or insight to be able to strongly advocate for a certain outcome for every single one of the large number of facilities, services, or actions that are now on the table for consideration in this plan. We do believe that there is value in our strongly encouraging the Park to propose a preferred alternative in the DEIS that reflects the following:

A) AS PLANNED, EVALUATE FOR REMOVAL, REPLACEMENT, OR RE-PURPOSE ALL NON-ESSENTIAL FACILITIES IN THE RIVER CORRIDOR THAT DO NOT CLEARLY PROVIDE A PUBLIC VALUE THAT CANNOT BE PROVIDED ELSEWHERE?. BUT ONLY REMOVE THOSE FACILITIES OR USES IF THAT ACTION WILL ACTUALLY BENEFIT ECOSYSTEM AND RIVER VALUES. DON'T AUTOMATICALLY REMOVE FACILITIES ? ENSURE THAT THE COST AND EFFORT IS JUSTIFIED BECAUSE A MEASURABLE RESTORATION BENEFIT OR RIVER VALUE BENEFIT WILL RESULT.

For example, we happen to agree with Park planners who we have spoken with that the Yosemite Lodge swimming pool is absolutely not necessary or essential for public benefit or to be located within the river corridor. But so what if the pool is removed? If the Yosemite Lodge facility mostly or completely stays, the ecological benefit of having or removing the pool is meaningless. That doesn't mean that a superior use may not be identified for that small spot in the overall river corridor, but is the cost of removal and the loss of a popular way to cool off during summer heat. As one planner mentioned, maybe having that pool results in fewer visitors heading to the river to swim, and thereby it results in less disturbance to river values.

Similarly, CSERC believes that the ink rink is clearly not essential. However, if it is evaluated for removal because it is unnecessary, will its site become a natural, functioning, accessible part of the river/forest ecosystem? If that is unlikely, then why would removing it be beneficial for the Merced River?

Removing the Happy Isles snack stand is certainly justified because it is not "essential," but the obvious question is then to what degree, if any, will removal of that facility lead to true restoration of riparian or ecosystem values? If it will just be a landscaped spot in between heavily used trails, what will removing the snack stand accomplish that is truly beneficial for the natural

system? CSERC believes that the focus needs to be on doing restoration where it makes sense and makes a difference, as well as provides a clear message that the Park Service is focusing emphasis on natural conditions and processes.

For example, the removal of a stables operation not only removes major contamination from horse manure that periodically results in elevated levels of fecal coliform pollution washing into Park waters, but stables are a non-essential activity that can easily found across millions of acres of public and private lands outside of Yosemite Park and the river corridor. In addition the impacts of trail compaction, erosion, conflicts with pedestrian hikers, and other issues all justify removing stables because that restoration action will make both a direct and indirect benefit for the river ecosystem and public benefits.

B) EVALUATE IF A FACILITY'S PUBLIC BENEFIT THAT MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDED ELSEWHERE IN YOSEMITE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE MISSION OF THE NATIONAL PARK OR IF IT IS PRIMARILY CATERING TO THOSE WITH FOND MEMORIES OF ITS USE?

The Wawona Golf Course has strong proponents and economic benefits for certain business operations. But is it either essential to have a golf course within Yosemite Park (NO) or beneficial to the public overall (PROBABLY NOT) to have the golf course? If the golf course was restored to its natural meadow condition, members of the public would not need to pay to make use of the site. More wildlife would likely be able to utilize the more patchy, less uniform habitat. And as the heading asks, is it really the mission of the Park Service and Yosemite Park to provide golf opportunity in Yosemite?

BASED ON ALL THE ABOVE, CSERC RESPECTFULLY PUTS FORWARD THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED "PREFERRED" ALTERNATIVE THAT WE ATTEMPT TO MAKE AS POLITICALLY REALISTIC AND ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AS POSSIBLE.

CSERC supports the following for a preferred alternative: 1) Include the ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL that are identified on pages 8 through 11 of the Alternative Concepts Workbook.

2) Take the following individual actions:

Greenmeyer Sandpit ? restore (as in Concept 1)

Abbieville and Trailer Village ? develop housing for 260 employees and develop remote visitor parking area to provide 200 spaces serviced by regional transit (as in Concepts 3 and 4)

El Portal Valley Oaks ? protect and remove infrastructure as in Concept 1

Yosemite Lodge ? No reduction of lodging will be approved as part of the Merced River Plan. Instead a programmatic plan will be approved for an eventual retrofit and revamping of the entire Yosemite Lodge complex at some point in the near future. A Desired Condition/Outcome of that Yosemite Lodge revitalization plan (as approved by this Merced River Plan) will be to generally retain the same number of lodging units, but to relocate the four current lodging structures out of the floodplain, to enhance the visual harmony of lodge buildings with the meadow complex, and to significantly upgrade and enhance efficiency for traffic movement, parking, and of course, access across the envisioned pedestrian undercrossing to the Falls.

Camp 6 ? Restoration of area closest to the river and relocation to provide 750 spaces (as in Concepts 3, 4, and 5). Site design to be chosen by planning staff based on complex jugging of tradeoffs?.

Housekeeping Camp ? Approve restoration and removal of 180 units to provide greater consistency with WSRA mandated direction, while still retaining 80+ units for historic values, low income camping opportunities, and diversity of visitor experience options.

Former Upper and Lower River Campgrounds ? New campground with 80 drive-in sites and 30 walk-in sites at former Upper and Lower Rivers Campground in the area outside of the 10-year floodplain. This new campground would be designed and constructed so that it minimizes or eliminates any structure or management action that would interfere with the natural flow and reshaping of the river corridor by the Merced River during times of flood.

Curry Orchard Parking ? Partial restoration as in Concept 1 ? remove 220 spaces

Paddling ? private paddling allowed only as long as large woody debris restoration is not constrained? commercial paddling is phased out by 2015

Stoneman Meadow Restoration -- Removal of Southside Drive and realignment of road as in Concept 1 and 2.

Curry Village ? Remove 40 units within rockfall zone and 40 tent cabins (as in Concept 4) for a total of 420 units retained.

North Pines Campground ? Restore 100-year floodplain and remove 80 campsites

Campgrounds in general ? Restore riparian zone in vicinity of campgrounds by removing sites within 100 ft of the ordinary high water mark (Concepts 4 and 5)

Camping ? Concessioner stables area is re-developed as new campground with 40 drive-in sites. Merced High Sierra Camp converted to temporary pack camp and all infrastructure removed. (Concept 3) + Addition of walk-in campground with 60 sites (Concepts 4 and 5)

Bridges ? free-flowing condition of the river improved through the removal of Stoneman and Sugar Pine bridges. (Potential removal of Ahwahnee bridge will be delayed for at least 10 years beyond the removal of Sugar Pine bridge in order to evaluate whether or not ecosystem and free-flowing benefits actually justify its additional removal). Stoneman bridge may be replaced by a far broader bridge, but only if design appears to be sufficient to allow free-flowing hydrology to function.

Stables Area: restoration of Concessioner stables where possible outside of footprint needed for new campground with 40 drive-in sites? commercial trail rides are eliminated.

Merced Lake High Sierra Camp ? Either reduce significantly the number of lodging units at the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp down to 30 beds or less, or preferably, remove that Camp and its related infrastructure. That would remove a core development that is NOT essential and conflicts with the wilderness character and management mandate of the wilderness zone. (Concepts 1 and 2)

Parking ? New Valley Day Use Parking Area at Taft Toe in West Valley created to provide 400-500 overflow parking spaces out of the 100-year floodplain? shuttle service expanded to West Valley during summer busy season.

ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT COMPONENT CRITICAL TO USER CAPACITY

Limit the number of private vehicles in East Valley during 100 busiest days of season

Provide widespread visitor education, gateway business education, online Park communication, and other outreach to LET THE PUBLIC KNOW THAT ONLY XXX NUMBER OF PRIVATE VEHICLES WILL BE ALLOWED TO ACCESS THE EAST VALLEY EACH DAY during the busy summer use period,

CSERC suggests that this be an adaptive management number, but that it be set initially at 4,000 total private vehicles maximum each day that will be allowed to drive into the East Valley. For vehicles that stay overnight and remain in the East Valley, they count towards the limit. Once real-time data determines that by 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. or whenever on a busy day that the 4,000 count is being reached, Park staff will begin to manage incoming vehicles headed towards the East Valley and provide two options where they approach Taft Toe and the cross-over.

First, those who prefer to simply loop across at Taft Toe to Northside Drive may do so and continue their drive with views of Bridalveil Falls, El Capitan, and the river. However, those who wish to access the East Valley will be steered to the new West Valley Day Use Parking Area where they can park and use timely shuttle service to easily access the East Valley.

Exceptions would be allowed for those who are handicapped (with placards) or other logical choices for exceptions, and they could still drive into the East Valley.

Variation on the above ? Once the selected threshold number of 4000 private vehicles in the East Valley is being approached, entrance stations make clear to incoming private vehicles that they will not be likely allowed to drive into the East Valley. Drivers are encouraged to consider parking their vehicle at Foresta (where a 400 space parking area would be constructed in non-controversial, already-burned area) and shuttle service would provide access throughout Yosemite Valley.

While the current Merced Plan states that out of valley parking options are not being considered in this plan, having a parking area at Foresta combined with a visionary and dynamic new visitor center at that location would make stopping there not only functional, but an exciting destination.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION

If Park planners can look at the Merced River corridor and ask the question, "What would we enthusiastically choose to develop or allow here if this was a clean, pristine state?" it is almost certain that a high percentage of existing campgrounds, buildings, roads, and activities would NOT be located in this natural cathedral of such impressive spiritual and ecological significance.

From the Christian backdrop, Christ threw the money-changers out of the temple. From the perspective of John Muir and those who inspired the national park system, the priority for providing access to the public was to retain spectacular natural environments in a manner that all the puzzle pieces would be present for future generations without being diminished or

degraded. From the perspective of those who love a particular use, it is almost certain that most of us are willing to sacrifice our personal preferences if we can honestly accept that our sacrifice will contribute towards a healthier, more sustainable Yosemite Valley and Merced River ecosystem. It is the Park's opportunity to educate the public as to why those sacrifices are pivotally needed.

With this Plan, the outcome will set clear precedent for not just what happens with Yosemite resources and visitor use, but how the Park Service sees its role in managing national parks into the future.

The safe and easy decision space is to remove a lot of non-essential uses that don't have powerful political defenders. The initial list of items to be removed under all Alternatives might fall into that category. It will be far harder, but far more visionary, for Park decision-makers to decide to use the Merced River Plan in Yosemite Park to set a precedent-setting direction by prioritizing protection of the affected environment -- the very essence of why national parks were created in the first place.

CSERC respectfully urges the Park Service to recognize that whenever restrictions on the number of cars, or level of access, or facilities is implemented, there are almost always howls of outrage. But once that new management becomes the norm, skeptical people not only eventually accept it as the new "existing condition," they often become strong advocates for the new status quo.

SET THE BAR HIGH. USE THE LEGAL MANDATES OF THE WSRA, THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN, PAST COURT DECISIONS, AND OTHER LEGAL REQUIREMENTS TO CHOOSE A VISIONARY MANAGEMENT PLAN THAT IS LOOKED BACK UPON IN DECADES TO COME AS AN INSPIRED MOMENT IN NATIONAL PARK HISTORY. ERR ON THE SIDE OF THIS TRULY AWE-INSPIRING, UNIQUE PLACE OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL AND ENJOYMENT. PROTECT AND ENHANCE RESOURCES AND RIVER VALUES.

[redacted], excutive director on behalf of CSERC staff, board, and members

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Correspondence ID: 252 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Central Sierra Env Resource Center Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 17:08:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: COMMENTS ON PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS FOR MERCED RIVER PLAN

Dear Don, Kathleen, Jim, and others on the planning team:

After so many years of our Center being involved in the Merced River plan and Park Service planning tied to Yosemite Valley, the current plan process provides a mixture of hope and of concern.

The hope stems from the fact that the planning staff has been exceptional in terms of striving to be transparent, in working to communicate with the public, and of being open to the input that strongly opinionated people share so passionately. The concern rises from the fact that at numerous meetings, Park officials and even the planners have stated that traffic congestion caused by a few hundred too many cars is the main problem. Opinions from planning staff have included the perspective that even when Yosemite Valley is clogged with crowds of visitors, surveys found that everyone is generally happy with their experience. The message shared is that traffic congestion is pretty much the sole problem.

Despite our Center's strong praise for the quality of leadership and planning in Yosemite at this time, CSERC strongly disagrees that vehicle congestion is the only major problem tied to user capacity in Yosemite Valley, and we also disagree that most people are generally happy amidst crowded circumstances. Of course people are thrilled to be in world-renowned Yosemite Park when they visit, even if they find it more crowded than they'd prefer. But if the question was asked in a different way than done in the studies, many visitors during peak summer periods would certainly agree that their experience would be better and the Park would be healthier if crowding was diminished.

These CSERC comments, however, focus on more than visitor satisfaction.

Our staff asserts that to meet legal requirements and to do what is truly visionary for Yosemite Valley and the river corridor as the Park looks to the future, the Park Service staff needs to not only significantly reduce traffic congestion, but to also ultimately select a management plan that truly ENHANCES resource values as well as the visitor experience within the river corridor.

TECHNICAL, LEGAL COMMENTS

When I attended the March 28th Merced Plan workshop meeting, I brought along a copy of the February 2001 Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan that our Center was originally engaged in with Park planners many years ago. I intended to discuss key parts of that early document with planning staff because it appears that the current strategic approach for the Merced River Wild and Scenic River Management Plan is moving in directions that are at odds with legal decision statements provided by the Park Service in that previous plan process.

On page A-4 of the 2001 Revised Record of Decision of the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan,

the following text is provided:

"Although the Merced River Plan would amend the General Management Plan in certain respects, other aspects of the General Management Plan, including its five broad goals, remain unaffected. Implementation plans affecting the Merced Wild and Scenic River will need to be consistent with these goals and the management elements contained in the Merced River Plan." (underlining and bold added)

That Park plan explicitly spelled out that the Merced River Plan must be consistent with the five broad goals of the General Management Plan. Kathleen shared with me at the recent Yosemite Gateway Partners meeting that the Park "may" amend the General Management Plan with the new Merced Wild and Scenic Management Plan. Our staff understands that the new Plan may amend some aspects of the GMP, but it appears that the prior Merced River Plan document made it clear that the five broad goals of the General Management Plan must still apply.

On page 23 of the 2001 Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan, the Plan explicitly stated that the 1980 General Management Plan established five broad goals that "are still valid today and apply to the management of the Merced River corridor under the Merced River Plan."

Yet now, four of those five General Management Plan goals provide legal direction that may be in conflict with some of the Park's 2012 Concepts on Preliminary Alternatives for the Merced River Plan. Those four GMP goals are described in the 2001 Plan:

Reclaim priceless natural beauty ? "The priceless natural beauty of the river corridor shall be protected and enhanced for today's visitors and future generations."

(Note: To "enhance" the natural beauty of the river corridor is not just to maintain it. To "enhance" is defined as to improve, augment, increase, boost, enrich, or otherwise add to the existing value. Thus the natural beauty of the river corridor must be managed so that it is both protected and boosted, enriched, or improved. CSERC questions whether either Concept Alternative 4 or 5 will fully meet this test when it comes to resources in the river corridor.)

Allow natural processes to prevail ? "Some processes, such as hydrology, have been altered by historic and current land-use patterns. The Merced River shall be protected and further restored to its free-flowing condition, allowing the natural processes that shaped the Valley to continue." (underlining added)

This GMP goal makes it clear that the River shall be further restored to its free-flowing condition. Removal of bridges, rip rap, and other past structures or management actions that have led to a constrained river are proposed in the five Concept Alternatives. But the clarity of the GMP goal is that the objective is a free-flowing condition that allows the natural processes that shaped the Valley to continue. If feasible actions that are not politically popular are avoided, CSERC questions whether the Park will be in compliance.

Markedly reduce traffic congestion ? "Traffic congestion that occurs in the Merced River corridor can affect some of its Outstandingly Remarkable Values, such as enjoyment of the natural river environment. ?.Where applicable, the Merced River Plan contributes to reducing traffic congestion by guiding subsequent plans that address road locations and facilities, parking areas, turnouts, and other related issues." (underlining added)

There is no question that planners are focusing in on reducing traffic congestion. CSERC hopes that the objective will not just be where to park more cars so as to reduce traffic jams, but even more, to reduce the number of cars driving into the East Valley.

CSERC recognizes that the politics of our current era do not provide Park Service officials the public support to actually remove all private vehicles from Yosemite Valley as was so strongly promoted and officially approved as the objective in the past. BUT TO NOT PLAN TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE PRIVATE VEHICLE USE IN THE EAST HALF OF YOSEMITE VALLEY WITH THIS MERCED RIVER PLAN WOULD BE A HUGE SET-BACK TO SETTING PRECEDENT THAT THE QUALITY OF THE NATIONAL PARK ENVIRONMENT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PERSONAL CONVENIENCE FOR MASSES OF VISITORS. Reduce crowding ? "The popularity of national parks such as Yosemite continues to grow. During peak visitation periods, crowding can diminish visitors' experiences and may contribute to degradation of resources along the river." (underlining added)

This GMP goal is especially important because it clearly acknowledges that crowding can diminish visitors' experiences and contribute to "degradation" of resources. On page 5 of the Merced Alternative Concepts Workbook, item 3 under "Addressing User Capacity" states: "Activities will not be allowed to degrade river values or cause adverse impact."

Thus it is necessary in this soon-to-be-approved Merced River Plan that the Park Service select an action alternative that "reduces crowding" so that there is no degradation of resources along the river and there are not adverse impacts.

Key comment:

CSERC ASSERTS THAT PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS 4 and 5 CANNOT BE FOUND TO BE CONSISTENT WITH AT LEAST TWO OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN GOALS REFERENCED ABOVE.

In 2011 there were 67 days identified when traffic levels exceeded capacity in the east end of Yosemite Valley. The congestion in 2011 was evident in more than just a lack of parking spaces. The level of traffic last summer resulted in both vehicle and human congestion, some periods of elevated emissions, higher levels of noise within the river corridor, and sprawling visitation during peak use periods that resulted in high use of trails and activities in river corridor areas surrounding lodging and service facilities, and a resulting increased level of impact to river corridor resources.

Simply in terms of disturbance of wildlife, whether it is nesting birds or foraging animals, the higher the number of people in the river corridor, the higher the resulting incidence of disturbance. High levels of human activity inarguably add to some degree to various impacts to biological resources along the river's riparian area and meadow systems.

This is an important point that appears to be lost in many Park staff statements to the public about congestion. CONGESTION IS MORE THAN TOO MANY VEHICLES RESULTING IN BACK-UP, INADEQUATE PARKING, AND STRESSFUL TRAFFIC. Congestion is also high levels of human activity on the trail to Vernal Falls, on the paths between Curry Village and Yosemite Village, at El Capitan Meadow, along the trails in the river corridor that lead to Bridleveil Falls, and all the other locations that become more and more crowded during extreme peak visitation periods.

Another important point tied to visitation is that even during peak use periods, there will always be a percentage of visitors who desperately seek to find the pockets of habitat or scenic view points in Yosemite Valley where they can either find solitude for a few minutes or at least find the least busy spot. When so many thousands of visitors crowd the Valley, that means that those who are looking for less crowded spots thrash deeper into the bushes or the talus/boulder fields. They push further back along the meadows and along the portions of the river corridor that may not get human use much at all during quieter times of the year. USER CAPACITY MUST CONSIDER THAT THE BUSIER AND MORE CROWDED THAT YOSEMITE VALLEY IS ALLOWED TO BE, THE MORE THAT INDIVIDUAL HIKERS OR BIKERS OR GROUPS OF QUIET-SEEKING VISITORS WILL PUSH FURTHER AND FURTHER INTO THE LIMITED BLOCKS OF HABITAT THAT DON'T NORMALLY GET DISTURBED. THAT LEAVES EVEN LESS REFUGE HABITAT FOR VARIOUS WILDLIFE SPECIES WITHIN THE RIVER CORRIDOR.

Alternative Concept 4 would allow an estimated 20,500 people or more during peak visitor use periods, and Alternative 5 would allow 24,000. Whether or not additional traffic management mitigation measures now envisioned by Park staff actually improve traffic circulation and whether or not additional parking spaces allow for more ease in locating available parking, those Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 would still allow extremely high levels of visitation. Accordingly, as spelled out above, high visitation inarguably results in higher numbers of people recreating directly along the river corridor or otherwise affecting river resources and values than what occurs when overall use is lower.

The higher the number of overall visitors (EVEN WITH NEW SOCIAL TRAILS MANAGEMENT AND OTHER NEW MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS), the more likely there will be increased impacts to biological resources, noise, air pollution, disturbance of wildlife, and other negative effects than when there is a lower number of visitors.

THIS MAY BE THE KEY POINT OF LEGAL CONFLICT IN THIS PRESENT PLANNING EFFORT BY PARK STAFF.

VISITOR EXPERIENCES ARE ALWAYS DEGRADED TO VARIOUS DEGREES (DEPENDING UPON THE AFFECTED INDIVIDUAL) BY HIGH LEVELS OF SOCIAL CROWDING. BUT MORE IMPORTANT, THE RIVER ECOSYSTEM WILL NOT LIKELY BE "ENHANCED" OR EVEN "PROTECTED" IF 20,000 OR MORE PEOPLE CROWD INTO THE RIVER CORRIDOR ON PEAK VISITATION DAYS. JAMMING SO MANY PEOPLE INTO A WORLD-RENOWNED NATURAL CATHEDRAL IS NOT THE QUALITY VISITOR EXPERIENCE THAT YOSEMITE VALLEY SHOULD PROVIDE, EVEN DURING BUSY PERIODS.

Even if the Park Service improves management for the Swinging Bridge picnic area or Liedig Meadow or trails in the river corridor east of Bridelveil Falls, the extremely high visitation levels of Alternative Concept 4 and 5 will be in direct conflict with WSRMP direction to "protect and enhance" river values.

In addition to the dictionary definitions for "enhance" that are provided previously, there is a legal requirement for the Park to follow court direction and to truly manage the river corridor in a manner that does more than maintain the status quo. This is especially evident when the mandate to "enhance" river values is compared with baseline conditions. Yet the choice of the baseline appears to conflict with the purpose of the WSRA.

THE CURRENT PLAN USES AN INCORRECT BASELINE FOR COMPARING EFFECTS

Current use levels and "existing conditions" that are now considered in 2012 to be the baseline levels are far higher than levels that were considered to be congested and of concern in 1999-2001 when our Center participated in the first attempt at a Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan. Yet now those new "current" levels are being used to compare and contrast alternative concepts.

High visitation levels that would have been far above the baseline at the beginning of the initial or even the second iteration of

the Merced River Plan are now being shown in Concept Alternatives as "less than" or similar to the extremely high peak total visitor use number of 20,500 people that is now described as "existing conditions and current management."

KEY COMMENT:

The baseline level of use for the present Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan should be the level of visitation and use that was measured/estimated at the launching of the original Merced Wild and Scenic Comprehensive Management Plan process, not the extremely inflated level of use that occurred last year during the congested summer peak season.

It may be that for this Plan to progress, the Park cannot re-do the Concept Alternatives to reflect the real baseline conditions at the beginning of the Wild and Scenic Management Plan process over 12 years ago. BUT IN THE DEIS, THE "EXISTING CONDITIONS" THAT WERE THE BASELINE AT THE TIME OF THE FIRST COURT DECISION OVERTURNING THE MERCED PLAN SHOULD BE CLEARLY SHOWN IN COMPARISON WITH VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES NOW BEING CONSIDERED.

This is an important legal point that the Park Service must openly address. CSERC asserts that the Park cannot legally keep increasing the "existing condition" visitor use level baseline over the years due to the fact that the Park has failed to complete a legally adequate Wild and Scenic River management plan. Even more of a concern, the Park should have completed a Wild and Scenic River management plan within three years of the Merced River being designated by Congress. The failure to do so has now led to so many years of increasing annual average use and far higher levels of private vehicle use in the East Yosemite Valley area. Thus the failure of the Park to complete a management plan with an appropriate threshold of user capacity for various at-risk resources has resulted in a continuous sliding of the baseline.

What was the average annual "existing condition" and baseline of visitor use and private vehicle numbers then in Yosemite Valley and the river corridor? Why shouldn't that level of use and visitation be the baseline for which Concept Alternatives and actual Alternatives are measured against for purposes of comparison? AT THE VERY LEAST, CSERC ASSERTS THAT THE VISITOR USE LEVEL AND EXISTING CONDITION DURING THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT A MANAGEMENT PLAN 12 YEARS AGO SHOULD BE THE "BASELINE AND EXISTING CONDITION" THAT PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES AND USE.

ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS 4 AND 5 CONFLICT WITH GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN GOALS TO REDUCE CROWDING AND MARKEDLY REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The Wild and Scenic River Act directs an agency to protect and enhance river values. CSERC believes that Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 are both too high to meet the WSRA mandate to protect and "enhance" river values.

Even if the baseline "existing condition" was based upon use last year, rather than when the Park launched the Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, both Alternative Concept 4 and Alternative Concept 5 provide for more overnight visitor use throughout the River Corridor than current 2012 use levels as described in the Alternative Concepts Workbook. Both Alternative Concept 4 and Alternative Concept 5 would provide for more Peak Overnight Visitor Use than current levels.

At Yosemite Gateway Partners meetings, Park officials have openly acknowledged that the congestion during last summer was undesirable to the Park Service, and Don and other staff invited Gateway Partners and the public to offer solutions about how to reduce that congestion. But with Alternative Concept 4 and Alternative Concept 5, the Day-Use Capacity Management Strategy would either be the same as last year's high maximum levels or capacity would actually increase to 24,000 people. More parking spaces or a slight shift to more busing may decrease the traffic congestion to some degree, but without some honest user capacity limits or threshold actions, periodic unacceptable use will occur.

By not decreasing Peak Overnight Visitor Use and not decreasing Day Use Capacity, Concept Alternatives 4 and 5 appear to directly conflict with the General Management Plan goal to reduce crowding. CSERC believes that the court, if brought into the debagte once again, will scold the Park Service for failing to get the message AGAIN if an alternative similar to Concept Alternatives 4 or 5 is chosen. Even if the Park provides more parking spaces, 20,000 or more people in Yosemite Valley and within the River corridor will inarguably result in crowding and excessive visitor use for resources and river values. Crowding would NOT be reduced for overnight accommodations and peak day use during times when crowding is most significant.

KEY COMMENT:

CSERC asserts that the current Workbook and public meetings have skewed the range of alternatives presented to the public by including two Alternative Concepts (4 and 5) that do not comply with the GMP goal to reduce crowding and to markedly reduce traffic congestion. Whether or not there are more parking spaces created, managing for a very high level of user capacity will result in there being more vehicles in the river corridor, and that will still potentially result in traffic congestion during peak use periods.

The GMP goal is to markedly reduce traffic congestion. The definition of "markedly" is shown as "noticeably, strikingly, significantly, and prominently." CSERC challenges the Park planning staff to consider whether either Alternative Concept 4 or 5 would significantly or prominently reduce traffic congestion. Our staff strongly asserts that traffic congestion would NOT be

"markedly" or significantly reduced if either of those Alternative Concepts were selected.

UNPOPULAR ACTIONS IN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT 1 FURTHER SKEW PUBLIC INPUT

After criticism at the March 28th public workshop, Park Service staff did mention to the public that Park planners do desire to get public comments about which specific items are supported within each Alternative Concept and which are not supported by commenting members of the public. However, even hearing that once from planners, many members of the commenting public will follow the choices laid out for them and simply select an Alternative Concept and communicate their choice to planners.

Most of the interested public, or at least a majority of commenting members of the public, will NOT support completely removing lodging units at Yosemite Lodge or completely removing Housekeeping Camp or removing great numbers of existing parking spaces. Having those components be a key part of Alternative Concept 1 thus will cause most members of the public to choose to give their support to another alternative, even if they feel personal support for very low day use capacity levels.

Likewise, many members of the public will not support all of the other possibly controversial proposed restoration actions, such as removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, removal of the Wawona golf course, removal of all campsites within the 100-year floodplain, and the complete removal of Housekeeping Camp. Accordingly, the way that the "lowest visitor use" alternative is presented, it inarguably will lead the majority of commenting members of the public to oppose Alternative Concept 1 and recommend another alternative with higher user capacity levels and less active restoration.

KEY COMMENT:

The loading of so many controversial actions into Alternative Concept 1 and the inclusion of many of the controversial actions in Alternative Concept 2 will inevitably push the public (and Park planners) towards support of higher user capacity level Alternative Concepts. This is very different from asking the public if they support a plan to reduce SOME of the overnight visitor use facilities currently available in the Park and to reduce some level of day visitor use to end up with considerably less peak total visitor use than at present.

This comment emphasizes that by asking for input on the 5 Alternative Concepts, the structuring of the low use alternatives will clearly result in less support for Alternative Concepts 1 and 2 than if the Park had packaged low use management options without including so many unpopular proposed actions.

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS ABOUT THE PRESENT 5 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT OPTIONS

Park planners have applied certain logic to package specific actions into each alternative and to calculate the resulting visitor use tied to campsites or parking spaces. BUT MANY OF THE DIFFERENT ACTIONS WILL NOT NECESSARILY RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN OVERALL PEAK VISITOR USE IN YOSEMITE VALLEY.

For example, whether or not the Wawona golf course is closed, or whether or not Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is open or closed, or whether or not Curry orchard parking is eliminated or reduced, day use visitation in Yosemite Valley may be almost identical.

What the current 5-Concepts approach fails to make clear to the public is that the Park has the ability to increase parking spaces, increase or maintain the current level with campsites by adding or relocating some out of the river corridor, and to still reduce overall peak visitor use by managing visitors in a different fashion from the present.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITES CAN DIMINISH VALLEY USE For example, the Park could begin actively promoting a well-designed trail system and interpretive education opportunity for Yosemite visitors between the Gin Flat intersection and the current location of Naturebridge. When Naturebridge moves to its new location south of the Valley, the opportunity to create a destination-quality trail system between the Giant Sequoia grove, the old growth mixed conifer forest east of Naturebridge, and the scenic ridge area across from Gin Flat is just one example of a major destination where happy visitors could be encouraged to spend time instead of crowding into the east end of Yosemite Valley during summer periods. A new visionary and inviting small visitor center there could draw visitors to that area and diminish demand for accessing the East end of Yosemite Valley.

Another example could be a shift to some degree to the West Valley? If a quality parking area is approved in the West Valley, the enhancement of the trail system and an increase in ranger-interpretive services in the West Valley could shift visitor demand to some degree away from the East Valley area.

Not all management or administrative options for reducing visitor demand for the East Valley can be addressed or even spelled out in this Merced River WSR Plan, but what can be spelled out is this: JUST BECAUSE THE PARK MAY CHOOSE IN THIS RIVER PLAN TO REDUCE THE USER CAPACITY LEVEL OF YOSEMITE VALLEY DOES NOT IN ANY WAY MEAN THAT THE PARK SERVICE MUST RESTRICT PEOPLE FROM VISITING THE PARK DURING BUSY SUMMER PERIODS. INSTEAD, IT OBLIGATES THE PARK TO DIVERSIFY VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES, TO EDUCATE GATEWAY BUSINESSES AND CUSTOMERS ABOUT SITES AWAY FROM THE VALLEY, AND TO MANAGE USE SO THAT WHEREVER VISITORS ARE IN THE PARK, THEIR EXPERIENCE IS WITHIN A USER

CAPACITY LIMIT THAT PROVIDES FOR A RICH EXPERIENCE.

CONCERN THAT PROTECTING AND ENHANCING RIVER VALUES IS NOT MEETING LEGAL DIRECTION TO PROTECT THE RIVER'S "RESOURCE VALUES"

On page 5 of the Alternative Concepts Workbook, planners quote the Guidelines for Wild and Scenic River management. One requirement is that studies will determine how much recreation can be permitted "without adverse impact on the resource values of the river area." The phrase "Resource values" provides wording that reflects the need to protect the natural resources of the river.

"Resource values" are different from the definition of "river values" that NPS identifies as free-flowing water, good water quality, and the ORVs of the river. Resource values can encompass macro-invertebrates, at-risk amphibian species, and other biological resources that are not directly tied to the ORVs, free flowing conditions, and the ORVs. CSERC asserts that the WSRA guidelines require that user capacity be set at a level that will not permit adverse impact on the resource values of the river area. Again, that requirement for protection of resource values may not be met by simply protecting Sierra sweet bay or protecting the valley oaks at El Portal or by restoring a lot of meadow habitat in certain locations.

Ensuring that "no adverse impacts occur to the resource values of the river area" again ties back to the need to adequately protect and to even enhance protection for habitat for amphibians along tributaries flowing into the Merced River and to reduce disturbance to riparian vegetation along the river and to avoid other significant human disturbance to the web of life within the river corridor.

That leads to a key issue that CSERC has raised numerous times and which has always been rejected (in the most polite and affable way).

FAILURE TO CONSIDER AQUATIC SPECIES LOST IN RECENT YEARS

In both last fall's workbook and the current Concept Alternatives workbook, there is zero discussion of the degradation of the river ecosystem due to the loss of western pond turtle, the foothill yellow-legged frog, and any other native, recently present aquatic species that may be extirpated from Yosemite Valley. This matters for both resource reasons and legal reasons.

When the Merced River was first designated as Wild and Scenic, it is documented that foothill yellow-legged frogs were present within Yosemite Valley, and there is anecdotal evidence that western pond turtles were still present as well. Because those are sensitive species in decline, those species would qualify as Outstandingly Remarkable Values that would deserve protection IF the management plan had been completed within three years as directed by the Act. But now Park planners communicate to our staff that the foothill yellow-legged frog and western pond turtle (although native to the Yosemite Valley ecosystem and river corridor) are no longer part of the existing baseline biological condition. Accordingly, Park planners have told our staff that there is no requirement to manage for those "not present" species or to protect essential habitat for those species.

KEY COMMENT:

CSERC believes that an appropriate and legal Merced River Wild and Scenic River management plan will define and show on maps where critical habitat exists for the expected future recovery of those two potentially lost native aquatic species of river segments in Yosemite Valley, the Merced Gorge, the South Fork Merced River segment, and the El Portal segment. In addition, the DEIS and the eventual selected management plan should fully consider how each action alternative will diminish the human-caused factors (especially related to vehicles and recreational use) that potentially contributed to the decline and loss of those native aquatic species from Yosemite Valley and elsewhere in recent years.

CSERC asks that in the DEIS that this issue be carefully considered and that user capacity "effects" be evaluated in terms of how likely each alternative does or doesn't protect and enhance the critical habitat of those two species (FYLF and WPT).

REALISTIC, FEASIBLE, AND LEGALLY COMPLIANT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

CSERC has high esteem for the diligent work that Park planning staff has applied to the effort of attempting to craft a range of feasible alternatives for compliance with NEPA. However, due to the inclusion of "poison pill" actions that simply will not be selected by the Park decision-makers (such as eliminating/restoring all of the major sites shown in Alternative Concept 1), it is important for CSERC to provide an example of an Environmentally Preferable Concept Alternative that is both feasible and balanced with the recreational demand for visitation to Yosemite Valley.

The Park has acknowledged that WSRA guidelines require that "public use facilities" be located outside the river area unless they are "?necessary to provide for public use and/or protect the river resource, and location outside the river area is infeasible."

A strict interpretation of the WSRA guidelines would mandate that ALL of the facilities described as "Major Site Restoration Locations" in Alternative Concept 1 would be eliminated or relocated. CSERC asserts that NONE of those facilities can be proven to be both "necessary" for public use and only be feasible inside the river area. But politically, neither Don or supportive

Park planners is likely to be willing to select that extreme of an alternative.

Accordingly, CSERC asks Park planning staff to consider the following:

1) With so many strong interests promoting retention of almost every activity, camp, campground, building, and activity within the Wild and Scenic River corridor, the political reality is that a feasible and approvable Alternative can only accomplish so much removal or relocation of truly non-essential facilities, activities, and inappropriate past alterations to the natural system (such as rip-rap) within the river corridor.

Even the most ecologically friendly Environmentally Preferable/Superior Alternative has to be based on political reality.

2) To quantify the greatest environmental and social benefit of removing or altering a facility or use within the river corridor, the Park needs to show in the upcoming EIS a comparison of the environmental and ORV benefits that would result from taking specific actions versus taking other potential restoration actions.

For example, while removing the Wawona golf course might eventually allow the entire golf course area to be restored to a natural wet meadow habitat, that benefit must be considered in light of the fact that adjacent to the golf course there is already an extensive wet meadow habitat that is being restored and enhanced. Thus the "demand" for restoring all of the original wet meadow habitat for that Wawona area may have less ecosystem benefit than removing the Curry Village Stables or removing the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. Both of those facilities not only have direct impacts to varying degrees on their actual locational sites, but they both cause effects that significantly affect the ecosystem in the river corridor because of use stemming from those facilities and rippling out across the river corridor.

Correspondence ID: 253 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 17:13:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please keep the heritage of our way of life,which includes horses. Horses and mules do not impact the environment negatively in fact they are a benefit. They allow low impact access to all of our sensitive lands.

Correspondence ID: 254 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Los Gatos Horseman Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 17:40:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I support Proposal 2 & 5 Effort to keep stock and people out of the back country are bad Ideas. There is so much bad science against being out in the wilderness it is sad. Please consider everyone and not just a vocal small group.

Correspondence ID: 255 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Obviously your goals and my goals are not the same. You cannot restore the Valley to what it was 100 years ago. Nature has it's own plan and man is it's worse enemy.

Comments: If the water in the Merced River is within the requirements of Federal Water Pollution Control Act, then what is the problem with what is there now? I can understand moving things out of the 10 year flood range but what you folks are talking about is just overkill. Where is the money coming from to do all the renovations you are talking about? I would like to see some controls on how many motorized vehicles are allowed within the Valley floor during the peak season. To remove the amount of overnight accommodations you are recommending is unreasonable. You will have a lot of upset over nighters. As for horses, why would you remove the stable from the Valley floor. There are a lot of people who want to see Yosemite but are not hikers and there is no better way than from the back of a horse.

Correspondence ID: 256 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 17:43:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Dear Superintendent Don Neubacher,

I recently became aware of the Merced River Plan. I'm a landscape photographer who has had a long-standing relationship with Yosemite National Park and Yosemite Valley. I first visited Yosemite in 1955 when I was two years of age. The Valley became an annual camping destination for our family vacations for nearly two decades.

I was Ansel Adams photographic assistant and consultant from 1979 until his death in 1982. My photography has been represented by the Ansel Adams Gallery since 1980, and I have conducted numerous photography workshops in Yosemite over the years.

I think it is important to preserve and restore the Merced River. I do have concerns about some of the ideas suggested in the

Merced River Plan. I'm about to leave on a trip and the deadline for commentary has approached. I wish I could be more insightful in my comments, but I will share them with you in haste.

El Capitan Meadow is one of my favorite places in the Valley. I understand there is a possibility of a perimeter fence around some areas of El Capitan Meadow. I further understand there is a possibility of installing boardwalks out into the meadow, as is the case in the more heavily trafficked areas closer to Yosemite Lodge. While I understand the importance of protecting and restoring the meadow, I believe the magical character of the environment would be compromised by both of the above proposed changes, giving a feeling of a city park rather than a contemplative natural wonder like El Capitan Meadow. I also understand that there is the possibility of adding a significant parking area at the El Capitan crossover. Adding another large piece of asphalt and reducing the natural environment at the center of the Valley I think would again compromise the aesthetic experience and unique attributes of the Valley.

I further understand there is the possibility of removing parking areas along the road. While the idea of removing cars altogether from the Valley is admirable, and likely should be implemented in the future, as long as cars are there it seems unwise to remove the ability for people to explore different areas of the Valley. I believe it will concentrate human traffic and have deleterious environmental effects in those areas that are closer to the few remaining possibilities. It will also diminish the ability of those who do not have the desire or the ability to walk significant distances to experience the peace and calm that can be found just a few hundred feet off the roadways and major trails in the Valley.

As I mentioned, there are many admirable objectives and proposals contained within the current Merced River Plan. However I believe there also some misguided suggestions contain in the Plan. I hope that further public feedback is invited and welcomed. As you know better than me, Yosemite is an international treasure. I hope that the long term preservation of the physical place, and just as importantly the magical experience that Yosemite provides, will guide you and others as you care for this jewel.

Respectfully,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 257 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 17:44:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Please do not consider closing any of the High Sierra Camps. As someone who has organized a family outing every five years which includes visiting all the camps, I can tell you they are a national treasure. They allow for exploration deep into the Yosemite wilderness and have been valuable teaching the younger generation of nieces and nephews about the beauty and splendor to be found in the backcountry.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 258 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I feel that they do. They try to give the best alternatives to limited visitation in the Valley which we all know is needed. I LOVE Yosemite! I understand the need to protect the park from overuse so that it is there for all of us 100 years from now.

Topic Question 2: This for me is the best alternative. The horses and pack station are protected and improved and the hourly rides are preserved in this concept. Not everyone can afford a day ride or a pack trip, so the hourly rides are terrific and a huge part of so many families that visit the park. They were the best part of Yosemite when I was a kid and now as an adult with my own horses (a love that was nutured by Yosemite pack station hourly rides) the back country is at it's best, in my humble opinion, from the back of a horse (or mule!) even if it's just for an hour.

Topic Question 3: 2nd best as the pack station is preserved, but the lack of hourly rides is not a good option in my opinion. Not everyone can afford a day ride or a pack trip. I couldn't as a kid and young adult. I LIVED for those hourly rides on our vacations!

Topic Question 4: No horses in the Valley? Are you kidding me?

Topic Question 5: See question 4 above

Topic Question 6: See question 4 above

Topic Question 7: I prefer that the pack stations, hourly rides, and commercial rafting be preserved in Yosemite!

Topic Question 8: I wonder about the trails and the erosion that back country BICYCLES will cause. If you elimanate the horses on the trails there will be no reason for bicycles to slow down or watch out for anything. They will consider the trails theirs and with little consideration for others RUN THEIR RACE from place to place. The horses and mules require the off road bicycles to go slow and watch out for stock. That is at least something to keep them slower on the trails.

Topic Question 9: I think that eliminating the commercial rafting in the Valley will also be eliminating an activity that alot of people cannot afford. Part of the draw to Yosemite is all the activities that are available to everyone, not just the folks that can afford to bring their own. Eliminating the commercial rafting reduces the activities available to everyone. This is a very big part of the draw that is Yosemite, so many different activities for EVERYONE to enjoy. If you are restricting the number of people allowed in the Valley, then overcrowding on the river in the Valley itself will not be a problem. Yes, when I was a kid I went rafting too! I could not afford to have my own raft, so the commercial rafting was looked forward to by everyone in my family.

Comments: Yosemite has always been the park for everyone because of it's diverse nature. Eliminating the rafting and the horseback riding is eliminating the affordable things that a family on a budget can do. I think restricting access to only a limited number is sad, but necessary to preserve the park. I have sooooo many great memories of vacations in the park. It was the one really neat place we could go on a budget (I am from a family of 6 kids. When we went we usually had 12 kids and 4 or 5 adults along. We all had our favorite activities that the Park fulfilled) and still have alot of fun and take home great memories. Please try to leave that part of the park intact. Thank-You for your time, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 259 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: I like that housekeeping camp still remains even though it is important to remove the units that are often flooded.

Topic Question 7: I really like the idea of high density employee housing. A lot of potential natural land is wasted with the sprawling tent cabins. I like restoring the Ahwahnee tennis court back to nature. It is not used and should return to a natural state.

Topic Question 8: I'm concerned about the relocation of bike rentals. Bike is the fastest and most environmentally friendly way to travel around the valley and personally think there should be even more rental spots (i.e. an additional one at the Ahwahnee).

I don't think removing the Lodge pool and snack stand is a good idea. I think it will lead to more bodies walking down to the river and creating extra erosion we are trying to avoid.

I am very nervous about the loss of employee housing. Ultimately it will create a lack of guest service and reduce the value of the Yosemite experience on our guests. The best way to preserve Yosemite is if our visitors fall in love with it and want to preserve it.

Comments: I hate to see the user capacity reduced so drastically. Yosemite can accommodate and should welcome many more guests but by managing how they interact with the river and valley we can preserve the beauty of Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 260 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: National Parks Conservation Association Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 18:07:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Workbook.

NPCA's mission: to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations.

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is an independent, nonpartisan voice working to address major threats facing the National Park System. NPCA was established in 1919, just three years after the National Park Service. Stephen Mather, the first director of the Park Service, was one of our founders. He felt very strongly that the national parks would need an independent voice-outside the political system-to ensure these places remained unimpaired for future generations. Now, nearly one hundred years later, NPCA has more than 600,000 members and supporters. In addition to our LEED-certified national headquarters in Washington, D.C., NPCA has 25 regional and field offices around the country.

The National Parks Conservation Association appreciates the years of research that support the park's suggested preliminary alternatives and we commend the wide range of options that the preliminary alternatives present.

NPCA supports the recommendations common to all alternatives including the removal of unnecessary infrastructure and development, the relocation of some facilities and the reduction of facilities that are inappropriately placed or in the floodplain.

At this time NPCA does not support a particular preliminary alternative. We believe that more information is needed before the ideas are complete. We recommend that prior to the DEIS, the park present a cost-benefit analysis of preliminary alternatives,

more information about exactly what the mass transportation would involve with each alternative and provide an explanation of where and why the Merced River Plan would amend the General Management Plan in each alternative, and in general.

NPCA recognizes that changes need to be made in order to control and manage congestion on peak days and times but we recommend that day-use permits are introduced only as a very last resort. We encourage many of the options provided in preliminary alternatives 3 and 4 to be used to this end, including; major increases in public transportation options in and around the park and its gateway communities, the use of an Intelligent Transportation System for real-time information about park conditions, a public transportation fee at the entrance to the park, roundabouts at key intersections, overflow parking lots in the West Valley and other remote spots, and minimally invasive infrastructure such as boardwalks in meadows. Pedestrian underpasses should be used only as a last resort; other less invasive options should be considered first.

NPCA encourages the park to increase camping only in places that are already disturbed and avoid new infrastructure. We recommend that the park provide a balanced variety of types of lodging within the Valley so that visitors of all economic statuses have access while ensuring that all lodging/camping create the smallest possible footprint in order to protect the ORVs.

Correspondence ID: 261 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Topic Question 2: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Topic Question 3: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Topic Question 4: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Topic Question 5: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Topic Question 6: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Topic Question 7: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Topic Question 8: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Topic Question 9: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Comments: I've heard that this is the last day to comment on the plan. With respect to all alternatives PLEASE save the Yosemite High Camps. Thank you very much.

Correspondence ID: 262 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: SJS Unit of Backcountry Horsemen of California Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 7: It seems that all of the alternatives are going to work at the reduction or ellimination of pack and saddle stock from the Park in general and speifically from the valley areas. Any further reduction in the use of pack and saddle stock in the park would have a negative effect on the park and most of the people who visit it. There is beauty and charm and major historical significance in the use of pack and saddle stock in the Park. All visitors should be allowed to see horses and mules being packed, worked, and ridden for pleasure currently in the Park and in the future as they were historically.

Topic Question 8: Our concern, that of the San Joaquin Sierra Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California, is that this new Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan will reduce or eliminate the use of pack and saddle stock in the Yosemite National Park. We are concerned that various kinds of activites and many or few areas will become restricted to pack and saddle stock.

Topic Question 9: Yes, it would be a tremendous opportunity to increse the use of pack and saddle stock in the park to help

develope, manage, and maintain the Wild and Scenic Merced River with the use of pack and saddle stock. Visitors come to Yosemite to see and enjoy the beauty and simplicity of nature. Pack and Saddle stock would add to that beauty and add a great deal of historical significance.

Comments: It is the position of the San Joaquin Sierra Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California that the use of pack and saddle stock, weather being use for work or pleasure, in Yosemite National Park should not be reduced or eliminated. Our position is that the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan should increase the use of pack and saddle stock in the entire park. They add to maintenance and continued developement of the park as well as adding a significant historical value. Sincerely, [redacted] Public Lands Liaison Chairmen San Joaquin Sierra Unit Backcountry Horsemen of California

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Correspondence ID: 263 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: The Yosemite Conservancy, The Sierra Club Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The 7 "Actions to Protect River Values, Common to All Alternatives" are management actions that appear to be common to Alts. 1-5 and are necessary conservation measures, with the possible exception of retaining submerged trees mid-channel in Segment 2, East Valley recreational, which are heavily used by swimmers and inflatables paddlers, and which present risk of injury if encountered. Removing them to the bank will avoid possible litigation. The first 5 bullet point goals of the Workbook are adequately addressed but numerical values chosen chould use a better explanation. Whether the alternatives are reasonable and feasible remains to be seen.

Topic Question 2: While meeting WSRA and EIR mandates, Alt. 1 creates an even greater socio-economic schism by reducing family-oriented moderately priced lodgings. Is Yosemite Lodge totally removed here? Why? The unseen stakeholder, DNC, hasn't weighed in. $20./night campsites are reduced by 50 while The Wawona and The Ahwahnee ($155-$525/night,low season) remain untouched and available to the culturally elite, creating an unconscionable socio-economic divide. However, the Administrative Uses and Operations directive in Alt. 1 are the best of the range of choices.

Topic Question 3: The Major Site Restoration measures in Alts. 1 & 2 describe Draconian removal of the tax-payer funded Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee bridges, along with lodging and recreation facilities, many of which were endorsed by Park Service Directors like Stephen Mather under the 1916 Organic Act expressly to attract park visitors--and Congressional appropriations. Reduction of this historic infrastructure may satisfy environmental concerns but may also obliterate visiting taxpayers' enjoyment to such an extent that they withdraw much needed financial support altogether.

Topic Question 4: This is a median compromise on ORVs and appears to be acceptable middle ground between the 2 extremes. Overnight capacity is increased by 110 campsites. The Alternative Concept 3 Rivers camp pattern is good if sites are non-electric, low impact car/tent oriented with 1 or 2-person sites added to fit the needs of single women and Seniors who look for a safe, economical Valley camp off-season. I would not like removal of the historic Curry Stables which would end Valley-based trail rides and pack stock services to the High Country. The DNC perception that trail mules are safer than horses is incorrect and people don't like riding mules. The rides are generating less revenue because of this.

Topic Question 5: This is the closest to the No Action Alternative by the numbers, but the mandates of the WSRA, Friends vs. Kampthorne et al, and the Ninth Circuit rulings call for action to protect ORVs with a scientific and scholarly basis for all baseline conditions. It's the mix and match sets of numbers in the range of alternatives that need more explanation regarding their basis. Total removal or reduction of the Housekeeping Camp defies logic. It's an affordable, safe entry-level family camping experience which also addresses the safety and physical limitations of Seniors. The Registration/Store building stems from the 1920's and should be considered an historic structure. The camp also contains the most swimmable section of the Merced.

Topic Question 6: The numbers here appear to be unsustainable within your goals framework, but the Day Use Capacity Management Strategy addresses future transportation needs well and should be incorporated into the final concept chosen. In 1953--I was 9 and in Houskeeping--the largest post-war vehicle driven into the Valley might be a station wagon pulling a teardrop Airstream. The average parking "footprint" was considerably smaller then than today's 24' RV. Families parked their car in camp and didn't move it until they left a week later. Today there are critical mass traffic patterns caused by day trips and commercial vehicles. More campsites and better planning will be needed to offset future gridlock.

Topic Question 7: We're never going to hear The Indian Love Call at Camp Curry followed by the Firefall, and we'll never put on our summer petticoats and dance to Sid Hoff's orchestra in the Pavilion after. We won't jump off Devil's Elbow rock or drink canned Daiquiris at El Capitan Bend beach at sunset or watch a mother bear and her cubs stroll nonchalantly through our camp. This is 2012 and Yosemite Valley is being loved to death, so despite my longing for the old days, my preferred alternative will be one we can all agree on...

Topic Question 8: Under Facilities Removed: The Happy Isles Snack Stand plays an important role in hydration to lessen heat-related illness for those coming off the Mist Trail. At the Lodge and Camp Curry, the ice cream service has long lines, especially from foreign tour groups, and their removal will be the end of this favorite All-American experience. The Curry and Lodge pools actually serve to keep people from swimming in the river. I see you've replaced the language "private paddling" with "boats" and an icon showing a kayaker. Your language opens the Merced to Kern River-style activity and accidents and

should be reconsidered.

Topic Question 9: I've suggested some mix and match choices and you'll have many others. It's unfortunate that the narrow emphasis of the WSRA application to 81 miles of the Merced in 1987 in order to ward off hydro-electric projects near the park forces all decisions to place primary emphasis on preserving the Merced's ORVs--completely ignoring the spiritual nourishment contemplated by John Muir, and the aesthetic enjoyment of the magnificent granite faces that characterize the Yosemite experience in total. To many of us, Yosemite is our true home and our cathedral. That needs to be remembered.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 264 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No. In the Workbook you list horseback riding as part of Visitor use, yet it appears that you will be removing Wawona and Curry Stables. Where will visitors be able to rent horses for back country trips? What about privately owned stock? Will they be allowed?

Topic Question 2: Stables should remain, and stay open for business.

Topic Question 3: Stables should remain and stay open for business. I support commercial rafting on the Merced River.

Topic Question 4: Stables should remain, and stay open for business.

Topic Question 5: Stables should remain and stay open for business. No mention of removing them in this concept. The RV park, and camp sites will impact the environment just as much or more than the stables.

Topic Question 6: Stables should remain and stay open for business. No mention of removing them here either. See # 5.

Topic Question 7: None

Topic Question 8: All of them.

Topic Question 9: Yes. There should be a Concept 6 that allows livestock use of the back country. All trails should remain open as they have since they were constructed. This will make trail maintenance more efficient. The riding stables should remain and stay open for business.

Comments: I am a horse owner and have lived in the Sierra Nevada foothills since 1971. My main form of recreation is horseback riding and camping in the back country. I believe in multi-use of our Public Lands and have enjoyed sharing trails and camp sites with a variety of users. I am seriously concerned that the National Park Service wants to remove the Wawona and Curry Stables, and intends to establish areas restricting recreational stock use and commercial packing in Yosemite National Park. These uses are historical and are allowed by law in the Wilderness Act. Therefore, I find all Concepts 1-5 unacceptable. Any Concept of the Merced River Plan will be detrimental to a vast number of people. It will eliminate many jobs, and many livelihoods will be threatened. With 17,000 tourists using wranglers to pack them in every year and 34,000 people who hire private rafting companies, recreation will be severely limited. These are our Public Lands. We the people have paid dearly for them, and should be allowed to use as well as protect them. Horses and mules have historically been instrumental in the building and maintenance of these trails and should continue to be used as such. In my personal experience, the majority of back country stock users are conscientious and respectful of the environment and other users. They know that they must be stewards of the land in order to keep enjoying it, and teach and use the principles of gentle use of the wilderness. Please rethink your concepts to include livestock (public and private) into the back country as they have done historically for a hundred years.

Correspondence ID: 265 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes they do. The goals are stated clearly on page 2 of the workbook - river values, visitor experience, visitor use & capacity, and land use management. The rest of the workbook describes these goals, and explains the state of each one under existing conditions and under each of the alternatives.

Topic Question 2: Hate it - camping inventory not much different than today

Topic Question 3: Hate it - camping inventory not much different than today

Topic Question 4: OK, but like the camping inventory in Alternative 5 much better

Topic Question 5: Don't like it - not enough camping

Topic Question 6: I like this alternative the best because it is the only one that restores camping inventory to pre-flood levels. Also, it continues to allow paddling without permit, and seems to say private paddling would be allowed in parts of the river not open today, so hopefully I can put in at Clark's bridge like I did before the 1997 flood.

Topic Question 7: I'm glad to see that all alternatives except #1 increase the amount of camping available in the valley. But Alternative 5 is the only one that restores camping to the levels of the 1997 flood. To me, the pre-flood camping inventory should be the target for any future development plans. Camping in the valley is such an amazing experience, and it's been so frustrating to reserve a campsite in the summer since the flood wiped out the Rivers campgrounds - almost half the campsites in the valley. It always seemed unfair to me that these campsites have not been replaced.

I also love to paddle on the river in my own raft. Before the 1997 flood, we were able to put in at Clark's Bridge, instead of Stoneman Bridge like today. Some of these alternatives, especially #5, look like this will be allowed again. That would be wonderful.

Topic Question 8: PLEASE, PLEASE don't close the Yosemite Lodge pool. This is one of the highlights of my trip each year. There's nowhere else in the world I can float in a pool while watching the magnificent waterfall. Doesn't the pool help reduce the number of swimmers in the river, and therefore reduce river degradation? Also, there are lifeguards at the pool, so swimmers are safer in the pool than in the river. If you must close a pool, close the Curry pool instead of the Lodge pool. The Lodge pool is larger, nicer, and more scenic than the Curry pool.

I'm concerned about how the floating permit system would work. What levels of float visitors would you allow? When I asked Kathleen Morse at the SF workshop, she thought it would be a lot less than today. It would be totally disappointing to camp in Yosemite for a week and not be able to get a float permit for even one day. Would the permit system be online, or in the park the day you want to float?

If the float permit system is intended to reduce damage to the riverbanks, another idea would be to allow unlimited float use like today, but charge floaters a user fee to float. The fee would pay for rangers to monitor the river and make sure floaters put in and get out only at designated locations, and have paid the visitor fee by wearing a wristband or something. Floaters who violate the rules would have to pay a fine. Hopefully, between the user fees and fines, you could hire enough rangers to ensure the floaters are not damaging the river. I'm just trying to think of a creative way to allow opportunities to enjoy recreation on the river while protecting the river at the same time.

Topic Question 9: Slide #34 of the presentation given at the workshop (I was at the San Francisco workshop) shows an interesting statistic - in 1953 visitors to the valley were 60% overnight, 40% day use. Now this is reversed - 40% overnight, 60% day use. This got me to thinking that a higher overnight use ratio would result in lower traffic and parking problems in the valley. When I camp in Upper Pines every year in the summer, I park my car for a week and ride the shuttle bus or my bicycle. Does the planning department agree with this? Using the Peak Overnight Visitor Use and Peak Total Visitor Use numbers in the Summary Comparison Table in the workbook, overnight visitor use is currently 29% of total visitor use. The 5 alternatives range between 27% and 38%. How about adding an alternative that has even higher overnight use percent - for example, the overnight use in Alternative 5 (8,500) with the Day Use of Alternatives 1 & 2 (10,200) would give an overnight use of 45%.

Comments: Have you considered tiered campsite levels for valley campgrounds? This is a common practice in Valley lodging options, as well as California State campgrounds. For example, Valley lodging has 3 tiers with different price points: low-level (Housekeeping & Curry), mid-level (Yosemite Lodge), and Premium (Ahwahnee). Many California State park campgrounds charge more for premium sites with RV hookups or ocean view than they do for standard sites. So take the 100 nicest existing valley campsites, and any planned RV sites, and classify those as premium sites. I would gladly pay $100 per night to stay in a premium site if it means it would be easier to get a reservation and I would get a nice campsite.

By the way, this workbook is a great piece of work for explaining the goals, current state, and alternatives for the MRP. It's well-written, easy to understand, has great maps, and a useful summary comparison table at the end. This workbook should be used as a model for future planning projects.

Correspondence ID: 266 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite Conservancy and Restore Hetch Hetchy Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The goals are broad and all encompassing. There will always be more details to drill down though I feel the plan and goals are well aligned. I am missing some of the Wawona area concerns addressed in the fall 2011 document here in the five PAC's.

Topic Question 2: Mr Muir would like this one for sure. I believe the 100 year flood plain line is too sharp a blade to cut the valley land use in a user friendly fashion. There are many very usable areas manageable in a less draconian manner that would

allow greater use of the river corridor resources and still allow for high river values.

Regarding the Day Use permits system with permits checked at entrance stations: the entrance stations are often closed and sometimes closed at peak for traffic flow. While checking at the entrance has value unless they are checked at the parking areas as well or exclusively a large percentage will be missed. The default has to be lot specific permit validation.

I appreciate the high restoration value of this PAC 1

Regarding 1.14: The loss of riding in the valley has some heritage consequences that I cannot weigh. I am not a horse person so I could see it go. For many and especially young people it might be a real loss...I am thinking of Junior Rangers et al.

I will assume that when ?restoration? is used as in item 1.14 re: Stables and Merced HSC the meaning is to remove in their entirety. Further, though there is more detail in 2.16 that 1.14 and 2.16 are in fact the same in their result.

This is the only PAC that moves the concessioner office out of the river corridor, remaining in the valley and not moving out to El Portal. I suggest it would be a high economy to have the general office in the valley for ?at hand? administration and save the expense of a large office building in El Portal. I favor this concept.

Topic Question 3: I prefer this PAC in regard to the Yosemite Lodge reduction as this type of infrastructure would be most impacted by significant flooding.

Bridges: All or nothing is my feeling on the bridges issue. I don?t see a value in keeping one when any one will severely impact the free flow of the Merced. In my ideal world we would keep the Stoneman and improve it to allow free flow...might be pie in the sky:)

Item 2.5 -West of Lodge: what is there now it is not clear though several ideas for this area have been proposed. Parking is good option though what about restoration for simple picnicing as well. Choices for this might come down to budget consideration and ROI.

Item 2.11: I am in favor of Stoneman meadow restoration through a boys town area road rerouting. Retaining Boys Town is not a high priority to me.

Item 2.13: The 150 ft riparian zone is the right blade for cutting campsites and other infrastructure throughout the river corridor and valley.

I am a huge fan of the High Sierra Camp System. The loss of Merced Lake is not on the table for me. There are quite a few ?reduction? management options from the fall 2011 document that could improve conditions without removal of the HSC. I would be in favor of those options. Closure would break the system as a loop program and that is unacceptable. I am also in favor of retaining and better managing the Merced and Little Yosemite Valley backpackers camps. Designated sites such as those in Glen Aulin HSC should be considered.

Topic Question 4: Here we must ask, ?Can we have PAC 1 and 2 restoration levels and status quo level of visitor use capacity levels?? A happy marriage that brings us as close to possible to the maximum restoration levels with current visitor capacity makes sense to me.

I feel capping visitor peak capacity at today?s level while creating for those visitors a better overall experience is the ideal. I want people to enjoy the park at peak and be inspired to come back again rather than suffer through crowding at peak and never want to come back.

I don?t see how raising capacity could bring a high value experience even with the technological and managerial magic wands used to ?make room? for everyone. If that means cutting back from current levels I am for it. A shoe horn is the wrong tool for a rich and rewarding park experience. (although you could use one to trench around your tent.)

Speaking of peak use: has anyone addressed ?length of stay? for campers and lodgers at peak season. A sliding length of visit system could raise capacity without adding infrastructure one iota. Also consider consecutive stays and repeat stays in say the same month as places to carve out more camping resources.

Item 3.7 I am not a big House Keeping Camp user though I am sure people love it and there is history here for families going back to beyond. I favor this reduction in the camp to the ordinary high water mark---my favorite guide line for restoration levels.

3.11 Curry Village pacs are consistent save for 1.10 which removes many more tents to accomplish the rerouting of the road. I favor the rerouting through Boys Town. Not sure why there is a difference in # of tents removed.

Topic Question 5: 4.4 More parking if necessary is of value though before building new in the river corridor I would explore the other options. At any ?visitor capacity use level? I favor shuttle systems development, El Portal parking space with commute shuttles and discrete overflow parking. This would add to the park enjoyment factor at every level.

Item 4.7 Camp Six is addressed in all PAC?s and they all agree on moving it north. The distinction is an additional 250 parking spaces. There is no notation on where the extra spaces are coming from or the impact of the extra spaces in the restored area vs. ORV?s gained from the lower 500 space number. I agree move it north though I don?t have enough information to evaluate the impact of the larger parking lot footprint vs the smaller footprint.

4.8 & 3.7 both address reduction in size of the Housekeeping Camp. It is unclear the distinction being made between ?within? the ordinary high water mark and ?out of? the ordinary high water mark. That said I am in favor of partial restoration of this area. 4.9: I like walk in campgrounds in this area over fully developed campgrounds or RV campsites.

Topic Question 6: The additional parking, camp sites, RV sites and lodge increases are in the extreme to me throughout this PAC. The more moderated versions as noted in previous PACs make more sense to me for park enjoyment and long term sustainability.

Item 5.6 Yosemite Lodge demographics are of interest to me. I want to fairly accommodate lodgers across all demographics and not reduce any one area to an extreme. I want to be sure that senior citizens who may favor, though I don?t have the figures, hard walled lodging are not unfairly impacted by a reduction in the Yosemite Lodge. While I favor the PAC 2 Yosemite Lodge reduction I am also mindful of ?types? of lodging cuts and overall camping/lodging mix for the valley. I am not in favor of moving it and making it bigger. I favor a reduction or maintain status quo based on the above concerns.

Topic Question 7: Jim?s Top Ten List

1) Create an optimum visitor experience at current or lower user levels 2) Restore to the maximum extent possible within the 150? of flood plain guideline 3) Keep the HSC at Merced 4) Move camp 6 parking north 5) Optimize in valley and commuter shuttles programs. 6) Retain rafting for both personal and limited commercial uses. 7) Reduce or remove bridges---Ideally restore Stoneman 8) Maximizing employee housing in El Portal. 9) Maximize out of valley parking 10) Retain backpacking camps in all designated areas.

Topic Question 8: According to Ranger Sally (an expert naturalist Yosemite Ranger) the average stay in the park is...wait for it...FOUR HOURS. How does this statistic impact planning? It is certainly worth an inquiry.

Bridges: keep them all, pull them all or make them work. A Stoneman Bridge Remodel is worth looking into.

If someone arrives at the valley to park and they don?t have a permit at peak what happens to them at that point? Do they block traffic entering lots? How are they guided to their next step of travel?

100 year flood plain guideline for restoration---too sharp a blade with a few exceptions.

Who uses the Lodging facilities vs the camping facilities demographically? Is this information taken under consideration in the redistribution of types of lodgings? For example: Are seniors impacted disproportionately over other demographics by the loss of hard walled lodgings?

Increasing the Yosemite Lodge size---No no no.

Can we achieve a PAC 1/2 restoration level with PAC 3 or 4 visitor use and capacity levels? I would like that very much.

Round-a-bouts traffic management make sense to me though I am not sure how they address pedestrian issues.

I am opposed to pedestrian overpasses. The footprint is just too huge---not to mention the visual impact.

Pedestrian underpasses are worth considering though flooding and size of footprint are concerns.

Topic Question 9: My short list of preferences, guidelines and alternatives: Maximize restoration where ever possible. Maintain current levels for visitor capacity. Maximize the out of valley housing, parking and services. Add camping where camping is currently in place or has been in place. Remove bridges. Retain the High Sierra Camp. Favor camping over lodging accommodations. Use the 150? of flood plain mark for the majority of restoration planning. Optimize the shuttle and related transportation systems. Set visitor expectations for permit requirements and the overall peak days challenges they may face when visiting. Optimize the visitor experience so they will hold the time in the park with awe and joy.

Comments: It is worth noting there are many international users of the park and they may have needs that as a native Californian

I would be hard pressed to address. I would like their user needs to be considered especially regarding permits and reservations. We all travel some distance to Yosemite though they sometimes come around the world to be here and I want welcome them through an international user friendly system.

A thought on shuttles: a really nice open air or glass roofed shuttle for visitors, especially newbies, would be an enhanced park entry experience over any conventional automobile experience. I can still feel my sore neck from craning it the car window to see El Capitan in 1989. This would be an awesome way to enter the park!

I appreciate your stewardship of these, OUR lands and sacred places.

Smiles, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 267 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: TWHA, MAU Sonoma County, Eldridge Posse Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: This is a general comment.

I have camped with my horse and ridden trails in Yosemite many summers and hope that others may also continue to be able to enjoy this way of experiencing the wildness of this extraordinary park.

Topic Question 3: no--please do not limit horses providing visitors with access to far away trails--an invaluable experience!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 268 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: American Alpine Club Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 3: Like the idea of removing 4 Yosemite Lodge buildings in the flood plain. Camp 6 parking is good (if not in sensitive area) but important to deal with the traffic congestion there (roundabout/pedestrian crossover). Do not increase RV camping.

Topic Question 4: Expanding Camp 4 should be on EVERY alternative. Like the idea of camping west of Yosemite Lodge. Would prefer the new Rivers CG to be walk-in, not drive in (see my general comments). Do not increase RV camping. Increase primitive walk-in camping.

Topic Question 5: Like West Valley parking. Should be available year-round and overnight with a shuttle stop. This would be ideal for climbers doing overnight climbs. Suggest some type of permeable ground cover. Do not like the idea of restoration fencing at El Cap meadow. Do not like the idea of day-use-only parking or parking passes since most of those proposed would be convenient for climbers attempting multi-day climbs. Provide bear boxes. Do not like the idea of any additional RV camping. Should be primitive camping instead.

Topic Question 6: I like this the best since it has the most camping and parking. However I do not like the increase in lodging at Yosemite Lodge. Also I think the blend of camping is wrong. Should be less for RV, somewhat less for drive-in, and more for quiet unobtrusive walk-in that would be appropriate for people looking for a more contemplative experience.

Topic Question 7: I like AC 5 the best since it has the most camping. Expanding Camp 4. Should be on EVERY alternative. Do not like the idea of any additional RV camping. Would like to see more camping like Backpackers (dense primitive walk-in) rather than more drive-in and RV (noisy) camping. Backpackers is the nicest CG in Yosemite and it would be a terrible shame if capacity was reduced there.

Topic Question 8: 0 Don't remove parking before a tested alternative is in service. 0 Previous efforts to remove parking have made congestion worse, not better. 0 Problems at Camp 4 and loss of the traditional low-key camping experience there increased exponentially when the parking behind the cafeteria was lost. Now campers complain about the strict rules and intrusive visits by LE rangers, whereas before the loss of parking such problems were much more sporadic.

Topic Question 9: Reduce amenity level at Yosemite Lodge. Remove existing bar and cliff room, replace by restoring to the old "great room" layout. Many current uses of bar and cliff room are incompatible with ideal Yosemite experience. For example extremely loud music in Cliff Room (wedding or commercial use) and MR Bar during quiet interpretive presentation to visitors in the amphitheater. Keep a small convenience store to reduce unnecessary travel. Remove lodging on river side of the lodge and replace with walk in camping.

Comments: 0 Like the idea of parking at El Cap crossover with a shuttle stop. Ideally some type of permeable, low dust simple ground cover (pine bark?). Hopefully you could park there overnight while on multi-day climbs instead of parking along El Cap

meadow.

0 Add Climbing as a recreational value in Segment 2.

0 Remove parking as a LAST step rather than a first step. 0 Don't remove parking before a tested alternative is in service. 0 Previous efforts to remove parking have made congestion worse, not better.

0 Major roadway changes (such as restoring N Side Drive W of Camp 4) should be very slowly phased in with mock-ups and while that is an attractive idea, I just can't envision how it would work practically. For example, last summer, the yellow cones near the Chapel made it nearly impossible for east bound emergency vehicles to get through, yet the cones remained there for an unbelievably long time.

0 Do not fence El Cap Meadow or restrict pedestrian traffic in El Cap Meadow. 0 Some boardwalks and viewing platforms in El Cap Meadow may be a good idea.

0 Use proven crowding reduction methods and natural disincentives such as removal of conveniences and amenities rather than "managed" alternatives such as quotas or restrictions. 0 Yosemite should NOT be a commercial venue for business conventions and the like. 0 Yosemite should only be for its traditional outdoor recreation activities.

0 Consider primitive dispersed camping as a primary alternative. Ideally: -- similar to Backpackers CG (a quiet walk-to site). -- primitive, with minimal improvements and so may be appropriate in sandy soil (not sensitive riparian) marginal floodplain area (nothing to block soil movement during flooding times). -- dispersed (no numbers or fixed concrete barriers to designate sites) -- campfires and fire rings prohibited (in new or selected new camping) -- a smokeless region for people who do not want to breath campfire smoke or may be sensitive to campfire smoke. -- self-registration (as is Backpacker CG now). -- no intrusive "papers please" interaction with LE rangers unless you are breaking the rules -- denigrates wild experience and since it was not always that way, it shouldn't have to be that way (paradigm shift). Interactions with resource rangers (bear education) are welcome! 0 Segment and reduce the number of RV sites. 0 Prohibit RVs on HWY 120 due to width (safety considerations). 0 Like downsizing of the lodge. 0 More group sites (east of Ahwahnee?) 0 Increase, not decrease, overall capacity of Backpackers CG.

Correspondence ID: 269 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: It seems the alternatives, especially 1-4 focus mainly on protecting the the river & natural resources but severly limit the people's access to the river and the High Sierras with the elimination of Merced HSC and other area of the park. The plans with the lowest numbers protect the river and natural resources but severly eliminate the recreational values and opportunities for people to enjoy the park, including the river. Too much lodging, camping and facilities are removed for them to be feasible. The plans with the highest numbers allow for more recreational use and preserve more facilities, increase camping, preserve affordable lodging. They protect the natural resources, but not to the same degree.

Topic Question 2: There is nothing I like about this. 1. I was able to hike to the Merced HSC for the first time last summer & enjoyed the trail from Vogelsang to Merced to Sunrise HSCs. If you remove the Merced Lake HSC, hikers wouldn't be able to hike 'the loop' unless they were outfitted for and comfortable with solo backpack camping. Day hikers such as myself (I'm 70) love the option of day hiking in all parts of Yosemite & hiking in the high Sierras was only possible because I could use the HSCs for bedding, meals and bathrooms. PLEASE leave the Merced High Sierra Camp intact. How is it harming the river? What research supports its elimination? There must be some solutions other than its removal. Put in compost toilets (like Volgesang) if that is your concern.2. Why does the Wawona Golf Course need to be removed? It's is part of Wawona's & the Park's history. What harm does it do to the S. Fork of the Merced? This plan removed way too much affordable lodging and camping. It seems that the Ahwhanee would the the primary lodging remaining. I would prefer to see the Yosemite Lodge, Housekeeping Camp, Curry Village and all campsites remain.This plan would essentially make the park a day use only event and would increase traffic and polution. Horses have been in Yosemite before it became a national park. Rangers today use them to patrol. I was glad when a ranger passed me on the trail last summer & asked how I was doing.

Topic Question 3: I have similar objections to this as Alternative #1.(1)Removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp: see my comments for Alternative 1.PLEASE leave the Merced High Sierra Camp intact. (2)RE:Wawona Golf Course: same comments as for alternative 1.(3)Seems that the Ahwhanee (too expensive for most families)would the the primary lodging remaining. I would rather see the Yosemite Lodge, Housekeeping Camp, Curry Village and all campsites remain. Again, this would essentially make the park a day use only event and would increase traffic and polution. (4)Why in the world would you add an RV campground in the park. RVs are not well situated for the narrow, winding roads of the park. Plus they are noisy; they add to traffic congestion, parking problems and block scenic views. I'd prefer for an RV campground to be located outside the park with shuttle service.

Topic Question 4: I have same opinions on Alternative 3 as voiced for alternates #1 & 2 regarding: Removal of Merced Lake HSC infrastructure...please leave it along with the Backpackers' portion of it. 3. This plan also removes too much affordable lodging. The Housekeeping Camp is a great option for families and provides access to a portion of the river that is wonderful for swimming and rafting. Please retain all lodging as Housekeeping camp. I could agree to removal of 40 units of Curry Village in the rockfall hazard zone...but I don't see why this is part of the the River Plan. 4. I love the additional sites at upper/lower river campground, but let there be car access. 5. I don't want the addition of the RV campground in the park. (See my comments

regarding RVs voiced for alternative #1.

Topic Question 5: The action regarding the Merced HSC is unclear. It says the Merced Lake Backpackers' Camp would be retained. Does this include the High Sierra Tent Cabins, bathrooms, kitchen area? If it does, YEAH...if it does not, Boo. See my comments in support of leaving the Merced Lake HSC as is as I wrote for Concepts 1-3. (2)I love the idea of expanding shuttle service to the West Valley. 3. I am against adding the RV loop in the campground. As stated for Concepts 1-3, RVs are not suitable for the narrow, winding roads of the park. Plus they are very noisy (if you every camped in a tent in the same campground with one, you know what I mean); they add to traffic congestion, parking problems and block scenic views. Locate it outside the park with shuttle service.

Topic Question 6: The action regarding the Merced HSC is unclear. It says the Merced Lake Backpackers' Camp would be retained. Does this include the High Sierra Tent Cabins, bathrooms, kitchen area? If it does, YEAH...if it does not, Boo. See my comments in support of leaving the Merced Lake HSC as is as I wrote for Concepts 1-3. (2)I like expanding shuttle service to the West Valley. (3) I also like that this plan provides additional affordable lodging and more camping sites. Camping is the best way to see Yosemite and most tent campers are respectful of and very conscientious stewards of the natural resources. (4)Please do not add RV loop in the campground (for all the reasons mentioned for concepts 1-4)Located it outside the park with shuttle service. (5)I like that bridges are not removed.(6)I like more campsites. (7)Please do not go to Day Use Reservations...stay with the way you have handled it in the last few years...just stopping traffic.

Topic Question 7: I have mentions those parts I prefer or not in each plan. (1)Keep Merced Lake HSC as is (2)Expand shuttle service to West valley.

Topic Question 8: I find it 'very interesting' that the reduction of sites in the Wawona campground is not mentioned in any alternative...it only appears in the summary on pages 26 & 27. Our family gave up trying to camp there when you instigated the reservation system. For over 30 years our family camped there when it was first come/first serve. Even if you are in the system & press reserve the first minute you can, it is impossible to get the site you want or any site at all. And now you want to reduce the sites available, and the best ones at that...along the river. Our favorite site was on the river and we did not harm it. We always left it better than we arrived as did they many friends we became acquainted with through the years. Something should be done with the bathrooms. Focus your attention there. Build a sewer treatment or increase Wawona's treatment center as we are now told it is at capacity. What harm to the river have the riverside campsites caused? People will walk along the river whether there is a campsite or not. That is part of the recreational use of the river. Adequate pathways can provide access while protecting the banks. (2) Another concern I do not see addressed that was mentioned in previous workshops: add bathrooms at the Swinging Bridge and Flat Rock areas along the S. Fork of the Merced in Wawona area. (3)Also find somewhere else for Mariposa Grove Parking. The White Store/History Center is not the place. If you eliminate driving into the Grove, please start shuttle service much earlier in the day. For those of us who enjoy hiking the trails in the Grove, you want to start earlier that 9:45 am on the hot summer days...and that is the earliest using the shuttle.

Topic Question 9: (1)The community of Wawona gets it water from the river. Please allow them to continue to do so. (2)As of now, when one travels from Wawona to Tioga, the roads takes you much futher into the valley than is necessary. This only creates more traffic in the valley. When going in reverse, the road just is at the far west end. Have both directions 'invade' the Valley as little as possible. (2)Add additional campsites in Wawona Campground. (3)Provide more frequent shuttle service from Valley to Tioga and Glacier Point and Wawona. And/or provide shuttle from the Glacier Rd/Hwy 41 junction to Glacier Point. (4)Keep the Happy Isles Snack Stand where it is or move closer to the Happy Isle Nature Center. Keep it close to that restroom and that end of the park. (5)The Wawona Stables & horses seem so natural next to the Pioneer History Center. My kids and now grandkids have ridden with Ranger Burl for the past 40+ years. The stagecoach ride is educational & entertaining. Horse droppings on the Wawona Meadow loop have been stepped over for many years...have a daily pooper-scooper would help. I hate to see the horses eliminated. (6)Why eliminate the 'raft & bike' rentals?

Comments: Some of the wording used in the plan write up are unclear. (1)What does 'repurposing' the Yosemite Village Sports shop, convenience shop and nature shop mean. (2)Is 'Merced Lake HSC' the same as 'Merced Lake Backpackers Camp'?

Over the last 40+ years, the NPS has been asking for public input. It seems that it is all to no avail. It seems to my friends & I who have been in this process for so many years that the Park Service would really like to leave as is when the Indians lived in the Valley and ban the people altogether. I so hope I am wrong.

Correspondence ID: 270 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Depends upon who's viewpoint you are considering. Do not care for this comment format - and definitely found it impossible to fill out at the meeting at Fort Mason. Too much to consider to make comments in 2-3 minutes alloted.

Topic Question 2: No - too restrictive in terms of people!

Topic Question 3: No

Topic Question 4: no

Topic Question 5: no

Topic Question 6: Parts good. Disagree with others. See comments.

Topic Question 7: #5

Topic Question 8: #1-2-3-4

Topic Question 9: Of course. See comments.

Comments: I believe that America's National Parks are funded by the people for the people for the use and enjoyment of all. The National Park Service has the responsibility to make them as available as possible to the greatest number of people.

I have been a camper at Yosemite most of my 69 years and it is a place very dear to my heart. I have stayed in all of the various accommodations Yosemite has to offer in the valley and Wawona. I have also been part of the citizens advisory committee for as long as it has existed (probably 25+ years). So my comments are based on experience, practicality, and a desire to keep the Yosemite experience as true as possible for my children and grandchildren and for generations to come.

Camping has always been a "Poor man's vacation". If you take away more campsites, you are cutting off the Yosemite experience to those who can only afford to visit Yosemite as a camper. If you take away Camp Curry cabins and Housekeeping, you cut off those who do not own camping equipment, are not sure they want to invest in such, or are afraid to actually "camp", but all of these folks want to experience Yosemite for more than just a drive-through in a single day. Most campers drive to their campsite, unload their equipment, and don't drive again till they have loaded up and are heading out.

Campsites have already been expunged from the valley, but I don't see those numbers included in your reduction figures. So we had a "hundred years" flood. That whole campground was immediately erased! As was the group campground in North Pines. And now there are proposals for further reductions in campsites available. That's just wrong!

Yes, there are traffic problems, but there have been several good solutions put forward to handle that. A good suggestion I heard at the meeting I attended earlier this month was to issue parking permits at the park entrance to those who have proven camping reservations, allowing them to drive to their campground and lodging. Day use vehicles would be shunted off to parking lots to be established as the entrance to the valley, with shuttle busses transporting visitors throughout the valley at 15 minute intervals. I see a suggestion for implementing a parking fee. I disagree with that. You pay to get in ? you're in! No nickel and diming folks.

I asked about plans to increase disabled housing. Got no answer. I do not see any provision for that in any of the 5 alternative concepts. Again, we need affordability and accessibility for all!

I agree that the Concessioner General Office does not need to be located in the park. And I am curious how the plan to house some employees in the valley and some in El Portal would work. Having to bus them in daily is a waste of their time and Park financial resources.

I fail to see the point of eliminating the existing swimming pools in the valley. Without those, people will move to the river, adding to its pollution.

Floating on the river is a wonderfully relaxing and calming experience. Don't deny people that.

Don't touch North Pines campground!!! Please!! It's the best there is.

However, removal of the stables to another location in the park is a good idea.

Overall, I favor most of Alternative Concept #5, given the considerations I have cited above. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my personal input.

Correspondence ID: 271 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 19:42:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Removing the Stables, Rafting, Housekeeping Camp, Merced lake, Lodge and Curry Lodging and General offices will reduce the number of visitors and employees using Yosemite Valley. If you also remove the gift shops to outside the park you will decrease many more. Removing All non essentials as requested in the 1980 master plan will reduce visitation and

parking problem. Wait and see how this reduction helps the river problems addressed and only then consider any new construction in the Valley. New construction (new campgrounds, and new parking lots, new roads) should only be contingent on accessing the progress made by decreasing Yosemite Valley's destination resort style of entertainment. Only then should new areas be developed towards a new kind of Yosemite Valley visitation. Highly monitored fun educational programs on the park and its problems should be the only form of entertainment besides site seeing. Mother nature can heal pretty fast when given a chance. No new construction yet. I heard the ice skating rink is slated for removal too but not written in this plan. The rink does not seem to cause over crowding in the winter and is one of the few entertainments when Badger is closed. It does get people out doors during cold times. How does it really ruin the river?

Correspondence ID: 272 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: National Forest Recreation Association Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No.

Topic Question 2: Concept 1 does not meet the National Park's statement on their Home Page that states: "We are proud that tribes, local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individual citizens ask for our help in revitalizing their communities, preserving local history, celebrating local heritage, and creating close to home opportunities for kids and families to get outside, be active, and have fun." By reducing use, reducing facilities, and reducing services to the public, Concept 1 would create negative impacts on local communities; it would eliminate activities and facilities that are part of Yosemite's history; it would eliminate opportunities for kids and families to get outside; and it would eliminate and reduce having fun in Yosemite.

The proposal to reduce or eliminate any of the existing commercial services should not be considered further in any analysis. Visitors to Yosemite need the services provided by the concessionaires and other approved contractors (including guides) to assist in having a safe and enjoyable experience in the Park. If anything, the services and facilities should be expanded to actually meet the needs of the public, now and in the future.

Specifically, Yosemite needs MORE campsites, not less. Camping provides a valuable alternative economically to those who want to spend the night in Yosemite and cannot affort a hotel. Camping is an important link to developing and enhancing people's connection to the outdoors. It also provides an excellent means for groups such as families, schools and others to share in the experience together.

No alternative should be considered that reduces the visitor use levels. Although there are a few peak periods of crowding, the majority of the year Yosemite is not crowded, and people should not be turned away.

Eliminating commercial raft rentals will likely result in more accidents and deaths due to people no longer having an option of renting equipment appropriate for the Merced River. This is a very bad idea. If you eliminate raft rentals - people will bring "K-Mart Specials" (ie: flimsy, cheap, and vulnerable to deflating) equipment. Renting appropriate equipment is necessary to enjoy the river.

The stables at Wawona and Curry Village should definitely NOT be eliminated. To ride horseback through Yosemite Valley, or other areas in the Park, enables people to use see and appreciate the Park by a means of transportation that is historic to Yosemite, and which allows people to re-live what early visitors to Yosemite experienced. Visitors on horseback can visit areas they can't see using the tour buses, and for those who are not adept at hiking or who have various ailments or disabilities, horseback riding is their only option to gain the sense of 'getting away from it all' and seeing areas they perceive are 'off the beaten track.'

The Yosemite Lodge units should be re-built to at least the number that existed before the flood. The Curry Village Ice Rink should be kept, as well as the rafting and bike rentals. Please revisit the statement on the NPS Home Page - people want to have Fun in Yosemite. The Wawona Golf Course and Shop are again - historical and an important value in many visitor's lives.

Overall, this is an elitist Concept designed to keep Americans out of Yosemite. This should be eliminated from further study.

Topic Question 3: Concept 2 also does not meet the National Park's statement on their Home Page that states: "We are proud that tribes, local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individual citizens ask for our help in revitalizing their communities, preserving local history, celebrating local heritage, and creating close to home opportunities for kids and families to get outside, be active, and have fun." By reducing use, reducing facilities, and reducing services to the public, Concept 2 would create negative impacts on local communities; it would eliminate activities and facilities that are part of Yosemite's history; it would eliminate opportunities for kids and families to get outside; and it would eliminate and reduce having fun in Yosemite.

The proposal to reduce or eliminate any of the existing commercial services should not be considered further in any analysis. Visitors to Yosemite need the services provided by the concessionaires and other approved contractors to assist in having a safe and enjoyable experience in the Park. If anything, the services and facilities should be expanded to actually meet the needs of the public, now and in the future.

Specifically, Yosemite needs MORE campsites, not less. Camping provides a valuable alternative economically to those who want to spend the night in Yosemite and cannot affort a hotel. Camping is an important link to developing and enhancing people's connection to the outdoors. It also provides an excellent means for groups such as families, schools and others to share in the experience together.

No alternative should be considered that reduces the visitor use levels. Although there are a few peak periods of crowding, the majority of the year Yosemite is not crowded, and people should not be turned away.

Eliminating commercial raft rentals will likely result in more accidents and deaths due to people no longer having an option of renting equipment appropriate for the Merced River. This is a very bad idea. If you eliminate raft rentals - people will bring "K-Mart Specials" (ie: flimsy, cheap, and vulnerable to deflating) equipment. Renting appropriate equipment is necessary to enjoy the river.

The Yosemite Lodge units should be re-built to at least the number that existed before the flood. The Curry Village Ice Rink should be kept, as well as the rafting and bike rentals. Please revisit the statement on the NPS Home Page - people want to have Fun in Yosemite. The Wawona Golf Course and Shop are again - historical and an important value and experience in many visitor's lives.

This is another elitist Concept designed to keep Americans out of Yosemite. This should be eliminated from further study.

Topic Question 4: The Plan has a preponderance of negative implications regarding visitor use and enjoyment in Yosemite National Park. It has a strong bias against commercial services and facilities that enable visitors to come, stay, eat, recreate, and enjoy the Park. Concept 3 (along with Concepts 1 and 2)does not meet the National Park's statement on their Home Page that states: "We are proud that tribes, local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individual citizens ask for our help in revitalizing their communities, preserving local history, celebrating local heritage, and creating close to home opportunities for kids and families to get outside, be active, and have fun." By reducing use, reducing facilities, and reducing services to the public, Concept 3 would create negative impacts on local communities; it would eliminate activities and facilities that are part of Yosemite's history; it would eliminate opportunities for kids and families to get outside; and it would eliminate and reduce having fun in Yosemite.

The proposal to reduce or eliminate any of the existing commercial services should not be considered further in any analysis. Visitors to Yosemite need the services provided by the concessionaires and other approved contractors (including guides) to assist in having a safe and enjoyable experience in the Park. If anything, the services and facilities should be expanded to actually meet the needs of the public, now and in the future.

As mentioned in Concepts 1 and 2, Yosemite needs MORE campsites, not less. Camping provides a valuable alternative economically to those who want to spend the night in Yosemite and cannot affort a hotel. Camping is an important link to developing and enhancing people's connection to the outdoors. It also provides an excellent means for groups such as families, schools and others to share in the experience together.

No alternative should be considered that reduces the visitor use levels. Although there are a few peak periods of crowding, the majority of the year Yosemite is not crowded, and people should not be turned away. Commercial horseback rides in Yosemite SHOULD NOT BE ELIMINATED!! To ride horseback through Yosemite Valley, or other areas in the Park, enables people to use see and appreciate the Park by a means of transportation that is historic to Yosemite, and which allows people to re-live what early visitors to Yosemite experienced. Visitors on horseback can visit areas they can't see using the tour buses, and for those who are not adept at hiking or who have various ailments or disabilities, horseback riding is their only option to gain the sense of 'getting away from it all' and seeing areas they perceive are 'off the beaten track.'

The Yosemite Lodge units should be re-built to at least the number that existed before the flood. The Ahwahnee Tennis Court and former golf course should be retained. Please revisit the statement on the NPS Home Page - people want to have Fun in Yosemite.

These are truly horrible and inadequate concepts / alternatives for current and future generations of Americans coming to visit and enjoy Yosemite National Park.

Topic Question 5: Concept 4 is another alternative that does not meet the National Park's statement on their Home Page that states: "We are proud that tribes, local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individual citizens ask for our help in revitalizing their communities, preserving local history, celebrating local heritage, and creating close to home opportunities for kids and families to get outside, be active, and have fun." By reducing use, reducing facilities, and reducing services to the public, Concept 4 would create negative impacts on local communities; it would eliminate activities and facilities that are part of Yosemite's history; it would eliminate opportunities for kids and families to get outside; and it would eliminate and reduce having fun in Yosemite.

The proposal to reduce or eliminate any of the existing commercial services should not be considered further in any analysis. Visitors to Yosemite need the services provided by the concessionaires and other approved contractors to assist in having a safe and enjoyable experience in the Park. If anything, the services and facilities should be expanded to actually meet the needs of

the public, now and in the future.

As mentioned in Concepts 1,2 and 3, Yosemite needs MORE campsites, not less. Camping provides a valuable alternative economically to those who want to spend the night in Yosemite and cannot affort a hotel. Camping is an important link to developing and enhancing people's connection to the outdoors. It also provides an excellent means for groups such as families, schools and others to share in the experience together.

No alternative should be considered that reduces the visitor use levels. Although there are a few peak periods of crowding, the majority of the year Yosemite is not crowded, and people should not be turned away.

Commercial horseback rides in Yosemite SHOULD NOT BE ELIMINATED!! To ride horseback through Yosemite Valley, or other areas in the Park, enables people to use see and appreciate the Park by a means of transportation that is historic to Yosemite, and which allows people to re-live what early visitors to Yosemite experienced. Visitors on horseback can visit areas they can't see using the tour buses, and for those who are not adept at hiking or who have various ailments or disabilities, horseback riding is their only option to gain the sense of 'getting away from it all' and seeing areas they perceive are 'off the beaten track.' To eliminate this opportunity to the public, is to eliminate an historic use that is critical for many visitors to see and appreciate the beauty of Yosemite. Do not cater to the handful of extremists who want to see commercial horseback riding eliminated in all Sierra Parks and Forests. But rather, cater to the thousands of Americans and international visitors who look forward to - and who enjoy this historic method of travel in Yosemite National Park.

Eliminating commercial raft rentals will likely result in more accidents and deaths due to people no longer having an option of renting equipment appropriate for the Merced River. This is a very bad idea. If you eliminate raft rentals - people will bring "K-Mart Specials" (ie: flimsy, cheap, and vulnerable to deflating) equipment. Renting appropriate equipment is necessary to enjoy the river.

The Yosemite Lodge units should be re-built to at least the number that existed before the flood. The Curry Village Ice Rink should be kept, as well as the rafting and bike rentals. Please revisit the statement on the NPS Home Page - people want to have Fun in Yosemite.

To only plan for existing use levels is negligent. Anyone can close facilities, it's the easy way out. To plan for, and to accommodate the future is more challenging, and takes more foresight. It was that very foresight that John Muir had when we beckoned people to visit Yosemite - for then they become dedicated life long conservationists. To keep them out will result in a population with no connection to their natural resources. Plan for use.

Topic Question 6: This is the only Concept that is reasonable, thoughtful and responsible. It actually plans for the future, takes into account the needs of visitors, and will result in a far better long term plan for Yosemite. This Concept is the only alternative that meets the statement on the NPS Home Page. It will help revitalize nearby communities, it will help preserve local history, it will celebrate local heritage, it will create opportunities for kids and families to get outside and to be active, and finally - it will allow visitors to have fun.

As mentioned in Concepts 1,2 3, and 4 Yosemite needs MORE campsites, not less, which is why this is the preferred alternative, with the exception of the reduction of campsites in Wawona. There should not be any reduction in campsites. Camping provides a valuable alternative economically to those who want to spend the night in Yosemite and cannot affort a hotel. Camping is an important link to developing and enhancing people's connection to the outdoors. It also provides an excellent means for groups such as families, schools and others to share in the experience together.

All existing commercial services should be allowed to continue. The increase in parking and overnight facilities is excellent and greatly needed.

This Concept is the only one the Park Service should consider. The others fail to accommodate the needs of the public.

Topic Question 7: The ideas from Alternative Concept 5 are those that are preferred.

Topic Question 8: Alternatives 1,2,3 and 4 cause great concerns because of their lack of adequately planning for current and future visitor use and enjoyment of the traditional and historic uses in Yosemite Valley and nearby areas. It is unreasonable that the Park Service proposed 3 alternatives that reduced use, curtailed and eliminated services, and proposed the removal of facilities, and only 1 alternative that proposed increases. The bias in these alternatives is of great concern.

Topic Question 9: There should be an increase in the overnight camping facilities for stock users.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 273 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Please see comments

Topic Question 2: Please see comments

Topic Question 3: Please see comments

Topic Question 4: Please see comments

Topic Question 5: Please see comments

Topic Question 6: Please see comments

Topic Question 7: Please see comments

Topic Question 8: Please see comments

Topic Question 9: Please see comments

Comments: Please preserve the High Sierra Camps. They are important history and a wonderful access to Yosemite for persons today. They provide a special access to the backcountry that has no other equivalent option can provide.

Correspondence ID: 274 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 20:57:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Please include the continuing existence of the Merced High Sierra Camp in all scenarios you are considering. The string of high sierra camps are unique gems, and should not be forsaken as you improve conditions in the area. People protect what they love. They can't learn about it to love it and protect it if they don't know about it. thank you.

Correspondence ID: 275 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The alternatives address the stated goals of the plan.

Topic Question 2: Most restoration of environment but severely limits visitor access.

Topic Question 6: Restores environment somewhat but facilitates increase in visitors

Topic Question 7: I prefer option 3 although option 4 is tolerable. My one visit was in the summer and the traffic in Yosemite valley was terrible. You need to treat the valley like a big parking garage. When it's full, don't let anybody else in. We really enjoyed our hiking in the High Sierra so I would definitely not want to lose the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. It appeared that the camp was retained in all alternatives and modestly expanded in Option 3, and I would strongly encourage not to change that aspect of any alternatives.

Topic Question 8: Alternatives 1 and 2 overly restrict visitor access. Alternative 5 would devote too much land to parking lots to support visitors.

Comments: I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the High Sierra Camps. These are rare/unique resources to enable people to enjoy in depth the various aspects (geology, zoology, botany) of an amazing environment. All alternatives appear to at least preserve the Lake Merced Camp. Please make sure that feature remains a part of all alternatives.

Correspondence ID: 276 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: While each option addresses stated goals of the Plan, the assumptions underlying them, particularly the carrying capacity and the outstanding values of Yosemite Valley (the "Valley"), need refinement. I find the description of the outstanding values in the Valley unsatisfying, because they understate both the outstanding values and the true carrying capacity of the Valley as a unique destination intended by Congress to be widely accessible. The Valley is much more than a museum that people visit once a lifetime. Planning land use around the Procrustean bed of the Merced River litigation allows a very small tail to wag a very big dog. The Merced is important because it flows through the Valley, not the other way around.

As will become apparent with my comments about specific Concepts, below, I strongly believe that the loss of campsites from the 1996-97 flood has done great damage to the quality of the visitor experience. The elimination of overnight accommodations and visitor amenities such as gas stations greatly -- and unnecessarily -- increases day use traffic, encourages inefficient vehicular use, adds great frustration to the visitor experience, and needs to end.

Furthermore, I do not see the elimination of private vehicular traffic as an asset. As someone who has climbed in the Valley since 1967, I particularly appreciate the many turnouts currently available. This disperses climber impact.

Watching the shuttlebus loads of visitors debark at Happy Isles and begin trudging up the trail toward Vernal and Nevada Fall reminds me of watching a herd of Galapagos tortoises. This herding is the very antithesis of the mountain experience, and mocks any wilderness pretensions. We need less, not more, of this sort of thing.

Appropriate infrastructure to accommodate the crowds that inevitably wish to experience this amazing natural treasure does not detract from the experience, it enhances it. Any approach to Yosemite Valley that fails to recognize the demand for visitor capacity fails at its essential purpose.

I have also participated in the Plan process since the 1970's. Frankly, I find a quasi-religious aspect to some of the Concept options offensive. Pagan earth worship has no more right to establishment as a state religion than Druidism, and yet I see evidence of just that in some of the alternative concepts designed to restore a "natural state."

I realize some interested parties wish to make Yosemite Valley rather like the King's Forest of England of old -- accessible to the aristocracy, and inaccessible to commoners. This violates the very reason Yosemite was set aside. The optional Concepts that seem to adopt this overarching philosophy include any option that reduces overnight accommodations (or, really, that fails to restore them to the already inadequate pre-1997 levels).

I've made this answer somewhat lengthy in order to shorten my responses to the remaining questions.

Topic Question 2: Utterly unacceptable. This Concept would reduce already inadequate overnight accommodations. For the reasons stated above, it must be rejected in the strongest possible terms. This is essentially like giving a prisoner a choice of being burned at the stake or crucified.

Topic Question 3: While not as outrageous as Concept 1, it's still a little like giving the prisoner the choice of being burned at the stake or drawn and quartered.

Topic Question 4: Increasing campsites is good, but this still reflects, essentially, the status quo, substituting campsites for commercial lodging sites. Eliminating the Stoneman Bridge would make park traffic circulation even more nightmarish than it already is, for very marginal benefits except to the Earth Worshippers. This concept resembles giving the prisoner the choice of being hanged or shot.

Topic Question 5: Expansion of parking and camping is good. Increased shuttle service is also good. It still suffers from inadequate camping opportunities and, for that reason, fails to address the real issues impeding visitor enjoyment. At least our prisoner doesn't face the ghastly choices of the first three Concepts, but rejoicing over slavery because one escaped the cross hardly makes me endorse it.

Topic Question 6: This comes the closest of the Concepts (all unstisfactory), to attempting to serve the visitors to the Park. I laud the Park for proposing increases in camping and commercial overnight accommodations. If the Park would also restore the park camping outside the Valley that has disappeared over the years, this would go a long way toward resolving the worst problems.

Topic Question 7: Of the options, only Concept 5 would be tolerable. Expanding parking and shuttle service, as in Concepts 4 and 5, is also good.

Topic Question 8: All create new concerns, but Options 1, 2 and 3 would be monumentally detrimental to the visitor experience by greatly restricting the carrying capacity of the Valley. While Concept 4 essentially preserves the current status quo, that has been unsatisfactory since the 1996-97 flood.

In particular, I see no estimates of how adoption of any of the options would change the likelihood of a visitor being able to enter Yosemite Valley legally. The lower-numbered Concepts clearly would reduce an individual's chances of visiting the Valley when he or she wishes. I wonder what other unforeseen consequences the lack of opportunities would cause, and how behavior of visitors would change if they knew they would not be able to return for a long time.

The Half Dome permit system is a case study in unintended negative consequences. I personally blame the death of at least one hiker, who tried to push her luck on the Dome, knowing that she would have no other chance to make the summit, largely on the permit system. All of these "squeeze the visitor" concepts would be like a Half Dome permit system on a grand scale. This

should frighten any planner.

Topic Question 9: Yes. More camping. There should be at least 500 more Valley sites than there are now. THere should also be several hundred more sites along the Tioga Road.

Gas stations should return to the Valley. The removal of what would ordinarily be necessary services from an area with several thousand daily visitors during peak months is silly. The NPS needs to have enough gumption to stand up to those who see private vehicles as the devil. Again, religious concerns should play no part in this plan.

Comments: I hope that won't be necessary for the planners to divine my viewpoint. I hope you will forgive my sarcasm, but this process has really disheartened my over the 35+ years in which I have been involved. The Wilderness Society and its allies may have a lot of money behind them, but ordinary working people are the ones paying for this park, and deserve a park that accommodates them. Yosemite Valley is a unique international treasure that needs to be open to visitors, not isolated from them.

Correspondence ID: 277 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: It opens up a public park paid for by all our tax dollars to the most, allowing diversity and a number of venues for everyone while still preserving the park.

Topic Question 7: A National Park is a public park and should be available to the public. When the 100 year flood came nature took care of what man had done. It is important for generations to come that they have access to the park. There are many venues for each individual. Those that choose the wilderness have 80% of the park to visit. They can get away from the crowds. For those that choose the valley, we need to accommodate their vehicles and manage the traffic in creative ways that do not detract from the experience. I think the roundabouts and underpasses are creative and good solutions. More parking is very important.

Topic Question 8: Eliminating campsites and less expensive alternatives will make Yosemite more of a day experience for those of lower income that can't afford the Ahwahnee Hotel and other expensive lodging. The camping experience of Yosemite should be preserved.

Comments: There is a need for more housing in and around Yosemite. It is difficult to determine the difference between Alternate 1 and2 in the El Portal Village Maps. A combination of options A and Alternative 1 would spread out the flow of traffic and congestion at the town center. Difficult to be specific when the designs are not.

Correspondence ID: 278 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I received this information today. As a citizen of CA I must comment on the entire plan which I have only had the time to scan briefly. My Comments are as follows:

I have been camping, backpacking, and hiking in Yosemite for 45 years. It appears to me that you wish to remove most of the camping sites in the valley because of the 10 year and 100 year floodplain, and the desire to return the area to its riparian habitat. If you remove most of the camping sites in the valley, where are we going to camp? It is already extremely difficult to get a site in the valley. We need more sites, not fewer sites!!!

I have a further issue with your idea to remove Merced High Sierra Camp. What can you be thinking? I was so fortunate to hike the High Sierra Camps with six friends and ranger James McGrew several years ago. This experience was truly one of the highlights of my entire life! People backpack Yosemite all the time. However, the opportunity for those who can't, or choose not to backpack, yet still enjoy this wonderful area, must not be denied to others. The opportunity to experience the High Sierra Camps and the adventure they provide must not be taken away. People offered the opportunity to experience all that this area has to offer are very important to the future of Yosemite as a National Park, and the future of our National Parks in general. Because of my age and health issues, I can no longer back pack, however, I can still participate in the High Sierra Loop Trip. Please keep the value of these trips in mind as an outreach to all who hike them to truly enjoy the depth of the hiking experience. Yosemite is my favorite spot on the planet. Please don't take our ability to enjoy camping and hiking there as we age and can no longer backpack into the back country.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments,

[redacted]

Now that I am aware of this, I will continue to read and add additional comments.

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Thank you for your consideration of my comments,

[redacted]

Now that I am aware of this, I will continue to read and add additional comments.

Correspondence ID: 279 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Carpe Diem Experience, LLC Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I assume the planning group has insured that all 5 of the alternatives presented satisfy the goals of the project. And that any of the 5 would be acceptable to the court to resolve the concerns set forth. With that in mind, I believe that while each alternative has merits, the range from severe impact (Alt 1) to mild impact (Alt 5) provides a choice that would end the Merced River protection goals. The only subject then is what will citizens tolerate as acceptable restraints.

Topic Question 2: Yosemite Lodge & Curry Village? A reduction in enclosed hard-sided accommodations would greatly impact the ability of a large portion of citizens to visit the park. Many visitors cannot go camping and need to have access to affordable lodging. The nearly 50% reduction in the park would make visitation nearly impossible for many.

Housekeeping ? Removal of this large number of units would also make it difficult for families who are unable to camp to stay.

Curry Orchard ? Removal of this large number of parking spaces in the highly desirable Curry area seems unneeded as it is located very far from the river.

Curry Village, Boystown ? This also seems unnecessary as they are very far from impacting the river.

Stables ? Why do we need a horse operation in the park? If the greater stables area were repurposed to proved additional camping or tent cabin lodging this seems to benefit a greater number of visitors. Horse riding tends to be in the regime of wealthy people and middle class or lower cannot afford this luxury, whereas many would benefit by a conversion of the area for other purposes.

Wawona Golf Course - We do not need a golf course to serve a small segment of visitors. Converson to camping or other use is appropriate.

A day use permit process would be a nightmare, fraught with the same issues we are experiencing in the Half Dome cables system - multiplied by several hundred fold. this will create a huge adminstrative program and only infuriate potential visitors who spend the greater part of the day to drive tothe park, only to be told they hav to be out by the end of the day.

Topic Question 3:

Stoneman Meadow: Rerouting the southsid eDr out of the Stoneman Area would seem to crate even worse problems in any diversional path.

My further comments are essentially the same as Alt 1:

Yosemite Lodge & Curry Village? A reduction in enclosed hard-sided accommodations would greatly impact the ability of a

large portion of citizens to visit the park. Many visitors cannot go camping and need to have access to affordable lodging. The nearly 50% reduction in the park would make visitation nearly impossible for many.

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Topic Question 4: A differential pricing structure for access to the park reeks of favoring wealthy visitors. The park should allow access to all levels of society and not proved this form of ?fast track? payment for admission.

Yosemite Lodge & Curry Village? A reduction in enclosed hard-sided accommodations would greatly impact the ability of a large portion of citizens to visit the park. Many visitors cannot go camping and need to have access to affordable lodging. The nearly 50% reduction in the park would make visitation nearly impossible for many.

Housekeeping ? Removal of this large number of units would also make it difficult for families who are unable to camp to stay.

Curry Village, Boystown ? This also seems unnecessary as they are very far from impacting the river. Rockfall hazard area should be bulldozed and restricted for safety.

Stables ? Conversion to a camping area is good.

Merced High Sierra Camp ? This camp needs to remain as it is. The High Sierra camps provide for a back-country camping experience for visitors who simply cannot do unsupported backpacking trips.

Topic Question 5: Since this plan meets objectives and allows more visitors, it is favorable to me.

West Valley day use lot ? this is a good way to reduce east valley concentration. A shuttle bus to main valley attractions should be acceptable.

El Portal Remote Parking ? It is unfeasible to assume visitors would park that far away and have to carry all their camping gear on a shuttle bus.

Yosemite lodge parking ? this is good.

A differential pricing structure for access to the park reeks of favoring wealthy visitors. The park should allow access to all levels of society and not proved this form of ?fast track? payment for admission.

Yosemite Lodge & Curry Village? A reduction in enclosed hard-sided accommodations would greatly impact the ability of a large portion of citizens to visit the park. Many visitors cannot go camping and need to have access to affordable lodging. The nearly 50% reduction in the park would make visitation nearly impossible for many.

Housekeeping ? Removal of this large number of units would also make it difficult for families who are unable to camp to stay.

Curry Village, Boystown ? This also seems unnecessary as they are very far from impacting the river. Rockfall hazard area should be bulldozed and restricted for safety.

Stables ? Conversion to a camping area is good.

Merced High Sierra Camp ? This camp needs to remain as it is. The High Sierra camps provide for a back-country camping

experience for visitors who simply cannot do unsupported backpacking trips.

Topic Question 6: Although this Alternative seems to meet objectives it also injects a significantly higher number of cars and visitors which negatively impact the park in many ways.

My other comments are as in Alt 4.

West Valley day use lot ? this is a good way to reduce east valley concentration. A shuttle bus to main valley attractions should be acceptable.

El Portal Remote Parking ? It is unfeasible to assume visitors would park that far away and have to carry all their camping gear on a shuttle bus.

Yosemite lodge parking ? this is good.

A differential pricing structure for access to the park reeks of favoring wealthy visitors. The park should allow access to all levels of society and not proved this form of ?fast track? payment for admission.

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Stables ? Conversion to a camping area is good.

Merced High Sierra Camp ? This camp needs to remain as it is. The High Sierra camps provide for a back-country camping experience for visitors who simply cannot do unsupported backpacking trips.

Topic Question 7: 4

Comments: 1. Kudos to the Planning team for a well written workbook. A lot of hard work is obvious. Thanks for the public outreach and webinars.

2. You must get the major media to follow this. MOST of the visitors come from California and most of those are from the SF Bay area. Publicize events and status in the SJ Mercury and SF Chronical to reach the most visitors.

3. Why do comments close at midnight MOUNTAIN time? This implies that others outside of Yosemite are driving this. The Denver office perhaps? Just seems odd.

Correspondence ID: 280 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Back Country Horsemen of Washington Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I think the goal of dramatically reducing the remaining saddle and pack stock use to accomodate the whims of the crowds of human powered recreationists that feel that they have superiority over traditional and historical ways of travel is not a way to honor our public lands and our country. Unfortunately it seems to be the way the National Park Service is heading, turning their backs on those that can't hike into the beautiful backcountry in favor of only providing for those that can.

Topic Question 2: It took me awhile to figure out that the Park Service idea of what "restoration" is really means eliminating/tearing out facilities rather than "restoring" them. Does that make it seem like you are being responsible while you remove the right for current and future Americans to visit this spectacular place, reserving it for only the privileged? Please keep the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp and provide for the existing stock use. Hold your ground on allowing existing uses.

Topic Question 3: Same comment as for Question 2

Topic Question 4: Same comment as for Question 2

Topic Question 5: As to stock use, this provides better options than Concepts 1, 2, and 3. I won't comment with regards to the

other uses in the Valley and along the river.

Topic Question 6: This is the best option for stock outfitting of the ones offered.

Topic Question 7: Our organization feels that saddle and pack stock users, both recreational and commercial outfitters are being pushed out of National Parks. We don't see this as an action to preserve the environment but rather as a way to simplify dealing with social prejudice by removing the irritating factor. Until the last twenty years, horses have always been a key part of National Parks use and management. While the use in the Valley is strictly managed, please do not reduce it further.

Topic Question 8: Increasing human powered active recreation will not improve the natural experience in the area. If you want a natural experience, that is best done from the back of a horse. Nothing is more natural than that.

Comments: For many years long before I rode horses, I was a mountaineer/climber. I did climb in Yosemite as well as worked at Mt Rainier, where Director Jon Jarvis is from. While I wasn't really tuned into horses as a rider/user, I always appreciated that they were around as well as the Pack Stations and outfitters. However, the direction with the National Park Service has now been to eliminate them.

Indeed, as a horseman, I was at the corrals in the Olympic National Park when the gear from Mt Rainier showed up after stock was eliminated there. This included old graver panniers and other packing equipment. Where Jon Jarvis goes (as well as Dave U who is now at Grand Canyon), horses/mules go away. I have been a very active participant in the America's Great Outdoors (AGO), and whereas as still a hiker/mountaineer, I feel like I am part of the desired target audience, as a stock users, I clearly am not. We are tolerated at best. Or like in Kings Canyon, Sequoia, Grand Canyon, Mt Rainier, and many other places, cast out as relics of the past.

So no, we are not happy with the goals. We like a country that serves all Americans including disabled ones, rural ones, ones that fight our wars, and maybe even uneducated ones who still love our public lands. Where are their rights? As the House of Representatives holds oversight hearings on this, I hope that the future holds more promise than serving a single priveledged urban class of easily annoyed self-indulgent white people. DOI can do better than this.

Correspondence ID: 281 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: tax payer and citizen Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 22:48:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am writing to express the importance of the high camps to Yosemite's resources and visitor use and education and to demand that they should not be removed from the park.

The camps are an important part of the visitor experience and a great opportunity for people to explore deeper into Yosemite with an extended ranger led educational program. Nowhere else in Yosemite can visitors (other than the fit and confident backpacker) achieve the same level of mental and emotional connection to the park. Merced Lake offers a great opportunity to reach a receptive audience. Please do not let anything happen to disturb or disrupt this vital part of Yosemite national Park.

Correspondence ID: 282 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The alternatives do seem to address some of the goals. Some concepts are very strict in the idea of conservation. Leaning more towards restoring(removing) much more developed areas than is needed to reach stated goals.

Topic Question 2: Concept 1 removes to many of the attractions that bring people in to the Valley thus limiting the Yosemite experience and the impact it can have on the very people it was preserved for. Also I dont think that any concept plan to remove a historic attraction or structure should be allowed to be considered. Removal of campgrounds would be a large detraction for lots of the common visitors. Concept 1 is much to drastic a plan to be beneficial to the Park.

Topic Question 3: Concept 2 also removes(restoration) to many attractions to visitors. Housekeeping camp might benefit from the relocation of some units but should not have any removed. Lowerpines and North pines should keep all camp spots. If camping or sleep accommodations are removed I believe it would severely limit the attracting qualities of the Park to many groups of visitors.

Topic Question 4: Restoration of existing meadows marshes and wet land areas without the removal of existing facilities is only going to add to the draw of the Valley to visitors. Removal of any camp spot or accommodation without the plan of replacing it would be counter productive to the draw of the Valley.

Topic Question 5: Concept 4 seems to be very logical and would not remove to many camp accommodations. Again it would only be fitting to relocate any removed camp spot.

Topic Question 6: Five also seems to limit the amount of planned camp removal. Limiting the available spaces for over night

camping would only increase the day use and that means more cars and more traffic jams and that would spell disaster for the future appeal of the Valley.

Topic Question 7: 4and5 are my preferred concept alternatives. Neither of which cover Merced Lake High sierra camp! Why?

Topic Question 8: All which limit over night accommodations concern me.

Topic Question 9: Improving on existing areas with out removal of overnight accommodations.

Comments: Why was there no info on Merced Lake High Sierra Camp which is in the head waters of the Merced river? I hope there are no plans to remove such a treasure of our great Park system. And what of Wawona and surrounding areas? No real info or plans there either? Iam very concerned that limiting the overnight accommodations in the Valley or elsewhere in the Park will only hurt and detract from the National Park idea of bring people to visit and enjoy our great Parks. I wouldnt want to drive all the way to Yosemite if I couldnt camp for a night or two. It would be traffic mayhem and not a spot I would care to see if it were seen through a car window during a traffic jam.

Correspondence ID: 283 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No ~ Too general. Need more specifics on Horse useage.

Topic Question 2: No ~ Reduces activities that visitors love

Topic Question 3: No ~ Reduces activities that visitors love

Topic Question 4: No ~ Reduces activities that visitors love

Topic Question 5: No ~ Reduces activities that visitors love

Topic Question 6: Yes ~ this would expand and protect the activities that visitors enjoy

Topic Question 7: Please do not remove the auto shop and force visitors to leave the park for services they may need.

Topic Question 8: Please do not remove the rafting and horse riding that visitors enjoy

Topic Question 9: visitors need to be able to experience the joy of rafting or horse riding in this beautiful park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 284 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See comments

Topic Question 2: See comments

Topic Question 3: See Comments

Topic Question 4: See Comments

Topic Question 5: See comments

Topic Question 6: See comments

Comments: I have been camping, hiking ,biking, rafting in Yosemite Valley and Wawona since the early 70's. I appreciate the tremendous job that has been done so far in restoring the Park. However I think some folks want to keep everyone out that don't want to back pack or rock climb. I like to think that the Park is for everyone young and old to enjoy and not just a select elite few. If anything I would like to see more camp sites in the valley as well as hotel rooms. I would like to see the Cabins that have a view of Half dome that run along the meadow rented out or turned into a large Hotel complex. I am sure these could be rented out for plenty of money and this money could be used for the park. I do not understand why we have Park Staff living in the

choicest location in the valley. I don't know of any other organization that would give the staff the choicest location and let the guests stay in the secondary locations.

I greatly appreciate what is being proposed to improve the traffic flow in the valley. The underpasses and the round about should help tremendously. I would hate to see what would happen if there was a big fire on a weekend in the valley. Folks would be trapped due to the existing traffic problems.

I do not think that you need to eliminate any bridges or concessions or camp sites or anything for that matter. What you have works very harmoniously with the river values and I don't see a need for any change here.

Riding a bike in Yosemite valley is a great way to see and enjoy the valley. I would strongly object to the elimination of the bike rentals. I think that there should be more bike trails that follow the river in the valley. I find that riding a bike in the valley can be somewhat dangerous once you get past Yosemite Lodge. You can ride along the road however the traffic can pose a potential threat.

Floating down the river is one of my great joys and I would strongly oppose anyone eliminating the raft rentals. IF anything the rafting area should be expanded to go further down the river.

I don't understand the fuss over the tennis courts, the pools, the horse back rides,the concessions ,etc. These are all very useful for Parents of children as well as the folks that stay in the valley. Not everyone wants to or can hike to Half Dome.

I would love to ride a horse/mule/donkey up to the base of Half Dome, however since they no longer offer this I am not able to do so. I can hike down from Glacier point to Happy Isles however I don't think I could make it to half dome in one day without a horse, mule or donkey without becoming a casualty.

I like the idea of having a group campground. It is so difficult to get even one site in the valley that it is very hard to camp with even your own family seeing as how their is a limit of 6 people in a campsite.

I have no problem with the campsites along the river in North Pines, they are a real treat for those folks that are lucky enough to get one. I have on several occasions and they are a fabulous way to truly enjoy the river values and they do little to no damage.

The only real damage I see and it is only temporary is in the areas where a lot of folks trample the river bed in order to enjoy the river, not the campers that are simply camping in a river camp site. Even still these areas can be roped off from time to time to let the areas recover from all of the human traffic and the ares can recover in less than 10 years for sure.

In regards to Wawona I think folks are being ridiculous wanting to eliminate campsites along the river. Those camp sites in Wawona are not causing any real damage to the river however they do contribute greatly to ones enjoyment of the river values.

I think the bear boxes that were removed from Curry Village for the use of the camp hosts should be returned to the public for public use. It would seem to me that taking these bear boxes from public use and converting them to private use would be against the law. These extra bear boxes are very useful for those folks that have large families or that are staying in the valley for a week.

I would like to see an acknowledgement from the Park Manager that campers have constitutional rights and are not subject to the unlawful behavior of rangers no matter how innocent or well intentioned they might think they are. I have never had a problem with bears, I put my stuff away and I keep a clean campsite however the last time I camped at North Pines I had rangers sneaking up on me at all hours of the day, looking to see if I might have left something out for the bears. If they want to come into my camp say something from a place where they can be seen and I will gladly let them come in and talk to me.Don't just sneak up on me by walking between my cars.

I have had rangers violate my rights far to many times and they get indignant when you remind them that your campsite is to be treated as your home and that you are entitled to the same rights as if you were in your own home. Needless to say the last time I stayed in the Valley was very unpleasant due to the rangers and the traffic problems and the lack of adequate buses and it will most likely be the last time I camp in the Valley.

Correspondence ID: 285 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The stated goals seem to be addressed -- I just don't like many of the answers!

Topic Question 2: I agree with the following proposals in this option: - Issuing day-use permits on peak summer days and checking them at entrance stations. - Re-establishing previous meadow habitat Otherwise, I find this option way too restrictive.

Strongly Disagree: #4, 6, 13, 14

Topic Question 3: I strongly oppose waiting to check day-use permits until the visitor gets to the parking location. Drive all the way in to be told that they can't park?!?!

Agree: # 5,14, Strongly Disagree: # 7, 15, 16

Topic Question 4: Agree: # 2, 5, 6, 8, 12 Strongly disagree: 7, 9, 13

Topic Question 5: Agree: # 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13

Topic Question 6: Agree: # 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 13

Topic Question 7: I like the idea of getting rid of unsightly "temporary housing" in Yosemite Valley and moving accomodations to El Portal. The restoration of meadows is also top on my list. More options for camping appeals to me -- it's such a good way to experience this park. Having enough parking is key to reducing the traffic gridlock that occurs all too much in the peak summer season.

Topic Question 8: Removing any of the three bridges. Removing camp sites without relocating them in a more appropriate area. Removing any of Yosemite Lodge.

Topic Question 9: If any of the parking at Camp 6 is removed, could parking be put in where the existing Concessioner General Office is presently located? Maybe that was what was meant by moving it north away from the river.

Comments: In all of this, please don't loose sight of the fact that people have to be able to visit this park in order to love it and care about what happens to it. To finally get here and be stuck in traffic only to find that when they finally do get to the parking area and there are no spaces left doesn't create a good feeling for this park. To have severely limited options for overnight accomodations also doesn't help. To eliminate the Lodge option and leave only The Ahwahnee, camping, or a tent without bath would eliminate many senior citizens who aren't able to camp or can't afford the Ahwahnee on their limited incomes. To have off-site parking makes it difficult for young families with all of the supplies necessary for babies and young children to be able to visit Yosemite Valley.

In this crowded world, there is no option but to limit visitation to those with overnight reservations or day-use permits on peak summer days, but please check for those permits at the entrance stations NOT at the parking area.

I would like to see more camping options. Also, if some of the parking needs to be removed I would like to see it replaced in a more appropriate area.

I was here in 1979 when the mall area was changed from parking to what it is now. That diverted the traffic to what was originally meant to be the back of the house -- the garage, employee dorms, and the loading dock for the Village Store. Now it's a big eyesore.

Concept 1 is the only alternative that calls for leaving the Concessioner General Office in Yosemite Valley and removing the Tecoya dorms and Ahwahnee Meadow row employee housing while all of the other concepts call for moving the offices to El Portal and leaving the Tecoya housing. This seems backwards. I think it is important for the people who run this Park to live and work here so they can see first hand what is going on. This includes NPS employees!

Correspondence ID: 286 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: EPCA/YEA Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 23:11:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: The El Portal Community Association (EPCA) and the Yosemite Employee Association (YEA) offer the following comments pertaining to the Carroll N. Clark Community Hall (hereafter referred to as the Community Hall) located in El Portal within the Merced River corridor. The Community Hall is the primary resource that our organization's use and care for on a daily basis.

The Community Hall provides space for NPS and partner meetings and trainings, community meetings (including hosting meetings like the MRP scoping meetings), community fundraising, and community social events.

This facility remains in dire need of renovation and is, as stated in every PMIS package put forth to date, at a point of deterioration where much of the initial investment is being lost. The longer these issues go without proper attention, the greater the potential is for the Community Hall to have a negative impact on the surrounding resources and the community.

In addition to the specific comments that we call out below, overall we recommend that the National Park Service use the MRP

as an opportunity to seriously reconsider past proposals put forth to rehabilitate the Community Hall, including but not limited to the hall renovation proposal from 1984, the subsequent PMIS proposals from 2000, 2006, and the present day proposal.

1. The NPS should build accessible restrooms at the Community Hall thereby resolving current sewer and accessibility issues. 2. The NPS should expand the kitchen space into the adjacent restrooms and bring the kitchen up to health and safety codes for commercial kitchens. 3. The NPS should retain the same amount of parking in Old El Portal for Community Hall based events and this should be included in the MRP site plans. 4. The NPS should retain the Community Hall's existing storage space behind the fire house. 5. The NPS should retain the outside space (lawn, patio, stage) and should consider investing in some upgrades to these features, such as a new sprinkler system (water savings/timer/potential grey water system from hall restrooms/kitchen), new structurally sound stage with roof, permanent fencing, and natural landscaping maintenance.

Correspondence ID: 287 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: GGNRA Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No. Removing the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp takes away opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Topic Question 2: Object to restoration involving removal of Merced Lake High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure.

Topic Question 3: Object to removal of Merced Lake High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure.

Topic Question 4: Object to removal of Merced Lake High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure.

Topic Question 5: Object if High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure is removed and only backpackers' camp is retained; will not allow access to those who cannot carry heavy backpacks.

Topic Question 6: Object if High Sierra camp lodging and infrastructure is removed and only backpackers' camp is retained; will not allow access to those who cannot carry heavy backpacks. Like preserving diversified visitor experiences and shuttle system instead of cars.

Topic Question 7: Due to variations in how the material is presented in the Workbook, it is difficult to ascertain whether any plan preserves the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp lodging, but I prefer any plan which preserves access to the Camp as it exists resulting in access to the entire High Sierra Loop system of camps.

Topic Question 8: Removing the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp takes away opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Topic Question 9: Preserving access to all High Sierra Camps and the Loop Trail, as a tradition in support of the National Park Service mission and as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Comments: I have deep regard for the High Sierra Camps that have provided access to many who could never access the wilderness experience without some assistance. Hiking the Loop trail was one of the most transformative experiences of my life. I therefore do not support of the series of alternative concepts which propose the elimination of camping infrastructure at the Merced High Sierra Camp, which would foreclose the possibility of completing the Loop. I was present at Merced High Sierra Camp when a tremendous storm broke. Many backpackers were flooded out, and hikers who made it in to camp thought that they might have died had the camp not been there to provide shelter. Merced Camp has provided an important way station for people accessing the wilderness for many years with relatively low impact, especially compared to what is available in the Valley. For me, and the folks I've met on those hikes, the High Sierra Camps exemplify the best of what the National Parks have to offer. The camps support the dual missions of the National Parks: to preserve scenic beauty, and to provide access for the public's enjoyment. The interpretive education provided by the naturalist ranger on a guided hike is unparalleled, preserving an important cultural wilderness tradition that is not replaceable by plans which value a total self-sufficiency available to only a narrow range of the completely able-bodied public. Please honor the dual purposes of the NPS and please do not close off one of the few wilderness experiences available to people of average means and physical abilities. Please keep the healing wilderness experience provided by the High Sierra Camps and the Loop trail available to the public. Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 288 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: No. I do not feel that they do. They will only ensure further complications and significantly take away from the overall experience that we truly treasure.

Topic Question 2: AWEFUL!!!!!!!!! Absolutely stunned that this would have even made it on to a list for us to consider.

Topic Question 3: AWEFUL!!!!!!! Again, there are no words.

Topic Question 4: Aweful!!!!!

Topic Question 5: Still aweful but moving in a better direction

Topic Question 6: Like the increase in camping and at least with this we are making progress toward something that may work.

Topic Question 7: NONE!!! Please do not take away camping, facilities, services, lodging, bridges etc.

Topic Question 8: All of them. Please see comment.

Topic Question 9: Yes. Open Upper/Lower Rivers Campground back up (seasonally if you have to) We have an RV and therefore have our own facilities. We would have absolutely no problem camping in an open area there, without the bathrooms etc., if you are that concerned about having a flood. Restore Lower Pines Campground and other lodging that was not repaired but instead, removed.

Comments: Ladies and Gentleman, Thank you for the opprotunity to let us comment on this process as it impacts my life and the lives of my children and extended family significantly. I started going in 1978 and have enjoyed a yearly tradition that started in my family 5 generations ago. I am heart sick over these proposed changes and respectully request you consider the significant impact these decisions have on the lives of countless people world wide and the resulting impact the purposed changes have on those inspirational experiences these treasured visits have on those lucky enough to experience it. Where would we be today had we not allowed John Muir to have the access or privledge of spending time in this amazing place?

You have proposed, across all alternitives, the removal of The Ahwahnee Pool & Tennis Court, the former Ahwahnee Golf Court, Yosemite Lodge Pool and Snack Stand, Yosemite Lodge Post Office, Happy Isles Snack Shack, Curry Village Ice Rink, and several other ammentities. There are plans to take out campsites, Housekeeping Camp, Lodging, Bridges etc. I am STRONGLY OPPOSED to any of these being removed! Not only do they contribute to the overall enjoyment of this amazing place but they help absorb the visitors durring those 67 key days you seem to be so worried about. They also take people out of traffic circulations thus reducing polution, and further contribute to a more even distribution of the daily guest population by providing divirsity in options. What is the impact these closure have on the remaining facilities? If you take out 2 pools, where are these visitors going to go? If they are like me, they will head right over to the very River you are trying to protect! This makes absolutely no sense. Nor does the removal of Historic bridges that povide links via bicycle or by foot to destinations throuout the valley in areas away from those that are more densly populated. Removal of Stoneman bridge, for example, would be extremely detrimental to the flow of traffic and would so significantly impact the opprotunity for visitors to get to locations via bike, their own 2 feet or shuttle bus quickly, that I'm certain you would see an increase in traffic congestion by those who have the ability to use their own car. These proposed removals are extremely detremental to this beautiful place we are all trying so hard to protect. What will this do to your ability to contol and assist the crowd? What kind of influx in capacity are the remaining facilities and wilderness capable of recieving? I highly suggest you investigate this further before impacting Yosemite any more negetivly than some claim it already has been.

Please leave our campsites alone. This beautiful place was set aside for all of the world to enjoy and already, in my lifetime I have seen this taken. Upper and Lower River are now gone, a significant chunk of Lower Pines Campground is gone, lodging possibilities at the Yosemite Lodge at the Falls have declined along with those at Curry Village, this is devistating to those of us who have been so inspired during these overnight stays. Those who camp and stay in Yosemite are not the problem! We make up a very small portion of those who enter the valley and are the ones you can often find volunteering countless hours of their own time to better this amazing place. Taking these effectively takes away an opprotunity that is far beyond what even I can convey. Imagine if John Muir had never had the priviledge of an over night stay in Yosemite. Where would we be now? Where would the National Park Service be?

I would also like to voice my opposition to the current Half Dome permit system or any other further permit systems in the Valley. Many of us have no idea how we will be feeling the day of our permit. Will we be sick, will our bodies have adjusted to the altitude, are we able to get into the park the day we originally planned? These are all answers none of us can predict. It effectivily takes away the opprotunity for so many of us to enjoy these life changing opprotunities. For the record, I am one of the lucky ones to have made this incredible hike to the top prior to the permit system. It was only a hope my husband and I shared that our infant and older son would be healthy and well enough for their father and I to achieve this. Fortunatly it all worked out, not the day the we originally had hoped for mind you, but due to the fact there were no permits at this time we were able to make it work when it was right for us. As a result of it being a 50-50 shot, it is one we never would have pulled a permit for, and therefore an experience we would have missed out on. That opprotunity only has ever presented itself once in my life and I am so greatful that it was at a time when there were no permits as I may never have been able to have achieved this wonderful accomplishment.

Please focus your efforts on adding things that enhance and guid the visitor through this magnificent valley, like the walkways through the meadows, instead of taking away so much opprotunity to inspire passion in those that love this stunning valley. I

encourage you to look into creative alternitives like the possibility of setting a maximum capacity limit for day use in Yosemite and possibly allowing visitors to be bussed in once a max capacity has been reached. There are so many other options out there and I strongly feel that taking away what has been such a special part of what so many of us love and enjoy so much is NOT the answer. Thank you for your thoughtful concideration and for helping enusure these places and experiences won't be a distant memory for us and only something our children hear about.

Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 289 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I already provide comments to this questions at a workshop. I'm now submitting additional comments at the end of this form.

Topic Question 6: No additional developed should occur west of Camp 4/Yosemite Lodge and Swinging Bridge. Hence, no auxiliary parking lot at the El Cap Crossover and no additional campground near the El Cap Picnic area near Eagle Creek.

Topic Question 7: Alternatives 4 and 5 (with modifications)

Comments: As Yosemite National Park prepares to celebrate the 150 anniversary of the signing of the Yosemite Grant it's of imperative importance that whatever alternative that the Park Service selects to adopt for Merced River Plan to fulfill the requirement of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in regards to Yosemite Valley needs also to comply with the fundamental reason why the Yosemite Grant was signed into law and Yosemite Valley was set aside in a public trust: to insure access and enjoyment of this incomparable valley to ALL people of every walk of life and means.

It was to ensure the Yosemite Valley remains easily accessible to everyone, now and in future generations, so people of every means, of every social strata, the wealthy and the working class, would have access not only to visit Yosemite Valley during the day, but the transcendent experience of staying overnight in Yosemite Valley itself.

To achieve and maintain this lofty goal, I believe that the Park Service needs to ensure that Yosemite Valley retains adequate overnight accommodations including cabins, hotel rooms and campgrounds, to fully ensure that the ability of staying overnight to Yosemite Valley doesn't solely become the exclusive privilege of the wealthy or the connected.

In regards to the proposed alternative concepts presented in the workbook, the Park Service I believe should adopt the one that most closely matches what was agreed upon and adopted in the 1980 Yosemite General Management Plan (GMP).

In other words, the Alternative Concept that's adopted should specify that there will be 1,260 lodging units (as specified in the 1980 GMP) and that the Park Service retain 658 vehicle campsites and 14 group campsites (as specified in the 1980 GMP).

Of the five proposed alternative concepts presented in the Merced River Plan workbook, only Alternatives 4 and 5 come close or actually achieve this goals set forth in the 1980 General Management Plan, and hence the preferred alternative adopted by the Park Service for the Merced River Plan should be something of a hybrid between Alternatives 4 and 5.

The other three alternatives are simply too restrictive and fly in the face why Yosemite Valley was set-aside in a public trust in the first place and should not be considered for adoption by the Park Service.

Correspondence ID: 290 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I like the restoration of riparian zones, meadows, etc all of which honors the NPS mission of preservation unimpaired by human impact. The drastic reduction of unnecessary concession facilities and concession beds in the valley will reduce congestion (though will mean more traffic on 140). Most of the restoration has a strong benefit to the park resources, aesthetics, ecology and visitor experience.

HOWEVER: lumping Merced Lake HSC into the same plan does not work. Much of the infrastructure in Yosemite Valley really has no redeeming value and therefore should be removed. In contrast, Merced Lake HSC has a hugely beneficial impact on visitors of all ages as well as a huge potential benefit to the park and environmental stewardship on a far reaching scale.

Topic Question 4: Strikes a nice balance however, Merced Lake HSC is still removed and therefore cripples one of the most significant educational opportunities in the park.

Topic Question 6: Way too heavily weighted towards visitor use and increasing capacity without enough emphasis on

restoration of natural processes.

Topic Question 7: Appreciate the meadow restoration, riparian restoration in Yosemite Valley and removal of unnecessary concessions.

Alternatives 4 and 5 are too heavily weighted on visitor use. However they are the only two options which retain Merced Lake HSC which serves much more purpose than the number of beds in the camp.

Topic Question 8: Alternatives 1-3 call for the removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp: arguably one of the most powerful educational tools in the park with minimal impact compared with vast areas of drastic ecological, hydrologic, and aesthetic issues in Yosemite Valley. If the camp is removed, this would disrupt the entire High Sierra Camp Loop which has been an important part of the high country experience for many people for nearly a century. More important, the ranger guided trips through the camps have more heavily impacted generations of visitors and generated a sense of understanding, appreciation and stewardship unlike any other component of the park. If the High Sierra Camp Loop is disrupted, what would fill the niche?

Should the corridor boundary in Yosemite Valley be set by present river banks or by the long term potential for river location? Given the fact that over time, in the flat sandy valley floor, the Merced River frequently changes its course, meanders, cuts off oxbows etc shouldn't the corridor be based on the long term potential courses of the river so that it does not cut through Ahwahnee Meadow while climbing up nearly towards Moran Point? As the river changes course over time, it could eventually approach the river corridor boundary.

Topic Question 9: I see no reason why the restoration weighted plans couldn't also maintain Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, perhaps with reduced environmental impact by increased efficiency, reduced packing materials, less bulk/weight, and alternative energy sources that don't rely so heavily on propane.

Comments: I fell in love with Yosemite during frequent backpack trips to the park beginning as a child. I have worked as an seasonal interpretive park ranger in Yosemite since 1996. I applaud the overall concept of the Merced River Plan and restoration efforts. For the past fifteen years, almost every one of my interpretive programs has in some way dealt with the importance of ecological principals and working natural systems as well as the mistakes of management in the past and the need for restoration of natural processes for both visitors and ecosystems.

However, I'm EXTREMELY concerned about the majority of alternatives calling for removal of Merced Lake High Sierra camp. Having performed interpretive programs throughout the park for 15 years I can confidently say that the High Sierra Camps offer by far the BEST INTERPRETIVE OPPORTUNITY in the park in terms of the level of impact and lasting impression and stewardship carried over into everyday life outside of our parks. Loop trip rangers may not reach the sheer volume of visitors as interpretive programs in Yosemite Valley. However, the quality of connection is tremendous. For many participants a week in the high sierra camps is life changing on many levels.

The camps serve the NPS mission and carry on a legacy set by the first director of the park service. In 1916, Stephen T. Mather, called for the construction of the first three high camps including Merced Lake. He believed the camps would "relieve congestion in the Valley by enabling outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy Yosemite's wilderness with relative ease and in some degree of comfort; provide a compatible environment in which visitors could be instructed in the tenets of conservation and the objectives of the National Park Service, and; clarify the National Park Services' conservation objectives to the public."

The quality and quantity of interpretation is unmatched. Participants on the High Sierra Camp Lop trips are with a ranger for either five or seven days. Over the course of a week, we not only provide an all day interpretive nature hike on the trails, but also an evening sunset talk and campfire program. Most of us also conduct an astronomy program one night. That means that participants receive at least seven full campfire programs with in depth exploration of topics including everything from geology, wildlife, cultural history, aesthetics, management, climate, restoration, disappearing amphibians, extinction, bears, wilderness ethics, ecology, and human impact on a local and global basis. No other interpretive program offers anywhere near the the same level of comprehensive, tailored teaching and first hand experiences.

The audience is also an important target because of the potential for far reaching effects beyond Yosemite. The concentrated number of lawmakers, CEOs, politicians, other park's Superintendents, celebrities, writers, attorneys, and countless other influential people that I've encountered on guided trips, conversing informally at breakfast or dinner and most importantly attending the nightly evening campfire programs and sunset talks, far surpasses any other opportunity in the park. The size of Merced Lake HSC, distance from roads, large campfire circle and the fact that its usually the location for a layover stay all result in the largest audience sizes, most interaction and willing and active audience of any high sierra camp. I've had top executives from major auto companies on my campfire programs at Merced Lake. These guys would have never attended a ranger program anywhere else in the park. But at the high camp, it was the only entertainment for the night after dark so they were a captive audience. At the start of the program they said they did not believe in various global environmental issues (such as climate change). However after the program, they actually said that despite the barrage of media, television, political discussions etc, the programs in the back country were the first times they ever heard and felt anything persuasive enough to change their stance and choose to make a difference with their engineering and business practices for a reason other than economics. That would have never happened without Merced Lake HSC.

The camps provide an opportunity for wilderness ideals and discoveries for a wider range of visitor types. Many visitors to the high sierra camps do not fit the typical backpacker's profile. Many participants on guided loop trips have never been

backpacking before and would never go on their own without a guide and the comforts of the camps. However, many such visitors gain the confidence, knowledge and passion to experience nature on a deeper level on their own after a guided trip. Many participants on trips went backpacking all their younger years but in older age, still wish to experience the beauty, solitude, but without having to haul their food, bedding etc and most of all, they wish to stop and smell the roses so to speak. Rather than toil over the trip, they wish to learn and see things they never had the chance on their own. For example: Last summer I had a physician in his 50s, He was extremely scared to go backpacking on his own and figured that a guided trip was his only option. The first few days was a nightmare as he was overly self medicated (altitude medication and others), overly "prepared" with a 75 lb pack. After I helped him slim down the pack and clear his body of the medications, he saw the world from a completely different perspective. It took his body nearly a week to acclimate to the elevation. On the last day he told me of the change that occurred over the course of the last week and for the first time in his life, he saw the beauty of infinite myriad of wildflower species, the color of the alpine blue sky and lichens on granodiorite rocks (yes he used the correct geologic name), all without the tunnelvision of fear. As a physician, he felt that medications were the answer to physical difficulties and his fears about high elevation and potential dangers. However by the end of the trip he gushed tears of joy as he said the last two days were completely cleansing and eye opening. I replied, "you found the best drug didn't you." He smiled with exuberance and enthusiastically shouted, "Yes, that's it! Yosemite and wilderness is the greatest drug and the only drug we really need." He told me that without the high sierra camps and ranger guides, he would have never had the "most important experience and single best day of his life." He said the trip gave him a new level of understanding for the complexity and beauty of nature, and our place in the world as well as our impact from our everyday lives. But it took five days out there before he had that level of consciousness.

Any management plan to eliminate that opportunity simply does not fit with the park service mission of preservation for public enjoyment.

Overall the camps do pose a very small, though localized environmental impact in the wilderness. However, the long benefits to current and future generations of visitors and stewardship for Yosemite, other parks and the environment as a whole far exceeds the minor impact. Please keep Merced Lake High Sierra Camp in all future plan options. Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 291 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: All of the alternatives include provisions that seek to achieve the goals of the Merced River Plan. I applaud the time, energy and dedication that has gone into producing such an encompassing and impacting collection of ideas.

Topic Question 7: Some form of Alternative 4 or 5 and perhaps even parts of Alternative 3.

Topic Question 8: The idea that Merced Lake High Sierra Camp could be removed causes great concern for me. I believe the loss of this icon and the hospitality provided would do a great disservice to the current and future public that utilize this amazing resource. I also see a huge missed opportunity when I consider the pivotal role that the high camp does play and could increasingly play in educating visitors about what it means to be a good environmental steward. Allow me to elaborate on these two statements:

Merced Lake HSC is located in a remote part of Yosemite National Park. This part of the park sees comparatively few visitors as it is and the high camp was first established by Stephen Mather and the NPS with a primary goal that the public should be assisted in seeing the High Sierra and more remote parts of Yosemite. If Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is removed then a huge proportion of the current and future visitors to this part of the park will no longer make the journey to witness and learn from this environment and the culture and awareness that go along with such an experience. Plainly said, if you take away the camp then only a select few persons will be able to get this far into the park on their own. Families, children, and nature lovers looking to learn and explore will miss out on this wonderful opportunity.

Secondly, a wonderful opportunity exists to showcase what it really means to live in harmony with the natural environment. Opportunities to educate the public on Leave No Trace Principles and the idea of reduce, reuse, and recycle are plentiful in this environment. Embracing the culture of environmental awareness and good stewardship that exists in the camp and taking it to another level of awareness and education is where I would like to see the attention focused with regard to Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

Topic Question 9: I think we can get to a good final alternative and final MRP by belending some combination of what has been put forth in the 5 alternatives presented here.

Comments: Stephen Mather, internal document, February 1925.

"The primary duty of the National Park Service is to protect the national parks and national monuments under its jurisdiction and keep them as nearly in their natural state as this can be done in view of the fact that access to them must be provided in order that they may be used and enjoyed. All other activities of the bureau must be secondary (but not incidental) to this fundamental function relating to care and protection of all areas subject to its control."

Correspondence ID: 292 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: NPS is trying to do 'Somehing'(?) about the 1987 long forgotten WILD AND SCENIC RIVER legal designation,,,(Republican President Reagan's second term, natch) designation of the Merced River, INSIDE Yosemite National Park as if That was not enough protection. What is the ulterior motive now, under Democrat President Obama ? Is NPS on LSD, again??

The Merced River and its Yosemite Valley are certainly "Scenic". But official and legal "Wild and Scenic River" designation,,,!? What the he-ll is NPS, Congress, and President's Reagan (Dead) and Obama (politically in trouble) up to !? This is not, i firmly believe, about the Merced River inside and outside Yosemite National Park. A river inside a National Park does not need special, above all else!, protection, if NPS is doing a good job of managing and protection the whole National Park. So What is that D.C. swamp and the Federal Government really up to ??

Is the Tuolumne River designated a "Wild and Scenic River" with San Francisco's damn dam Inside the National Park and a water delivery system in decades of disrepair, like our national infrastructure? Let's move SF's dam that Never Ever should have been built Inside a National Park no matter how much SF was crying about the ill built and unprepared 1906 earthquake town damage, outside into the National Forest, before we let sly politicians pull the wool over our eyes about their real intent for Yosemite Valley. For years there was a sign in the public reception and lounge areas of the Ahwahnee Hotel "This hotel bla bla bla and its lounges are for Hotel Guests only", as if the rich that could afford it were more entitled than another other park visitor at $5 to $20 park entrance car fee guest to walk in and enjoy the Ahwahnee Hotel lounge ! OK, so the rich don't want to share Yosemite Valley with the masses; The public is getting fed up with the arrogant, selfish, exclusionary, anti-American abuses of the rich.

At the junction of Hwy 140 and Hwy 120, near the entrance to Yosemite Valley and On the Merced River, there was a CONCRETE DAM, for decades!! When NPS took it out, the Spring rise in waterflow of the Merced took out the 100 YARDS OF ROADBED AND ROAD, before where the dam USE TO BE !! Talk about idiots planning in NPS management !! Yeah, lets take out that dam for power generation,,,and then watch as the Merced River rises every Spring,,,maybe it won't take out that old weak road bed and major road,,,costing $Ms to repair and replace,,,plus all the slow contractor traffic delays, for months,,,This is the poor par of Park Service. Who was That Superintendent !?

There are car and pedestrian bridges, yes, more than one,,,at least 5 major ones just in the Valley,,,across the Merced River in Yosemite Valley, and for that reason alone, there is NO WAY any sane person can call Yosemite Valley's Merced River "wild". Thus, there is no basis for the legal 1987 "Wild AND Scenic River" legal designation of the Merced River INSIDE Yosemite National Park; It does neither the National Park nor its millions of visitors every year ANY GOOD. Unless you too don't like crowds of over 4 million tourist a year, mostly in Summer, mostly in the Valley next to the Merced River. More reason/s would be that , the Merced River's terminal moraine was dynamited by an early white guy-resident back in the mid-late 1800s, turning the Merced River in Yosemite Valley from a swampy wet mosquito-infested, diseased in Spring, more meadow then than forest now place. This MAJOR MISTAKE, environmental act/accident is seldom discussed, but certainly NPS is not recommending restoring the terminal moraine and causing more flooding in the Merced River's Yosemite Valley, and more disease carrying mosquitos,,,and LESS VISITOR ACCESS,,,are they? They already took away my favorite childhood campground, Upper and Lower River Campground, because of "flooding", when minor flooding has been going on in Yosemite Valley for centuries! A park ranger taught me that. And with few fatalities and no major visitor uproar. So why is NPS, under President Obama, on another major fool's errand? Meetings in 2007 (Pres. Bush43, ugh) and 2010 (Obama, too!?).

NPS has done and proposed some truly Stupid ideas lately. In the last 10 years, I have heard NPS rangers say that they would like to take out Northside Drive, the 2 one way lanes on the Yosemite Falls side of the Valley that are used to exit the Valley or drive the famous and super-popular Valley Tour loop in the open air trailer called the "Green Dragon", that was gasoline but is now running on natural gas and dragging 50-70 avid fans around in the open air, no walls, no ceiling, cab and a trailer full of benches. That would go away if NPS has its extreme way in this silly, ulterior motive "Wild and Scenic River" legal nightmare designation action. No more full moon, Moonlight Moonbow in the Waterfalls Valley Tours!?! NPS's idea is to just have Southside Drive and convert it from 2 lanes of one way traffic IN, to ONE LANE IN, next to, ONE LANE OUT !! NPS has been advocating removing the car entirely from Yosemite Valley for decades. So impractical.

The regional bus system, YARTS, is under-used, but an extreme value from places like Mammoth Mtn. on the east side of the Sierra's, for cheap!! I doubt the Summer Visitor traffic would like this plan of "just Southside Drive", one lane in and one lane out, when the wait at the Arch Rock Gate on 140 or the 120 hwy gate in the NW corner are sometimes a 30 minute wait to get IN the park,,,then hours of circling to park, now at former 'Camp6' near Yosemite Village and the Merced River. But WSR designation implementation/action would remove that much needed visitor parking,,,also beloved guest lodging in the Valley, and also beloved employee housing in the Valley that i lived in, shared tent in snowing winters and shared dormitory rooms for 2, for 10 years.

Like, did you hear the one that President Clinton had the NPS, for years, push a Large, multi-story, HIGH RISE PARKING GARAGE, out of 'natural-appearing concrete' next to,,,BRIDALVEIL FALLS !? Even if President Clinton is now believable that this ploy was 'just a bargaining chip', according to a YNP ranger , NPS should never have endorsed it on Principle alone. The NPS duty is to 'protect the national park and provide for the public enjoyment of the national park'. President Clinton being a liar and shameful President we need no further examples of. (Signing the death of the critical and famous Depression era, safer banking law, Glass-Steagal Act,,,ouch, President Clinton!) Back to the crazy ideas of the NPS, Congress and Presidents.

Did you hear about the 'proposed' aerial tram from the Valley to Glacier Point? How about CLOSING THE ONLY GAS STATION IN YOSEMITE VALLEY at the Lodge, which NPS did ?!! The only gasoline and diesel gas station for the public in the Valley ! Really? Yep. Soo Stupid. How about starting to permanently CLOSE CAMP 4, THE ROCK CLIMBER'S CAMP

opposit Yosemite Lodge,,,and getting SUED IN FEDERAL COURT by the many uber-rich "dirtbag" rock climbers, and loosing"!! Soo EMBARRASSING for NPS and the Feds !! And embarrassing for we taxpayers and voters and legal residents and foreign visitors,,, What kind of an Idiot do you have to be to be in NPS upper level management and not refuse to do these dumb things !?

Because NPS could not even do crowd control back in the 1960s and 70s with just polite Naturalists, or keep people out of tiny Stoneman Meadow at Curry Vilage with simple temporary fencing-duh!-, and all over the roads instead, THE FAMOUS FIREFALLS WAS STOPPED. Because of NPS incompetence, not the 'environmental' concern they now profess back in the 1970s. I lived in the Valley for 10 years, (thought i wanted to be a Ranger), but drove shuttle buses and tour buses,,,and for many childhood visits with family and the 24-7 experience of working there, even if for icky MCA(Y.P.C.Co.), i love the Merced River and the Yosemite Valley and the whole Yosemite National Park even more.

Delaware North (employees are not happy in Yosemite) of New York, who bought the Concessionaire rights from MCA, ick!, does not seem to be interested in doing more than one Valley Tour in the open air tram per hour, when MCA would do 2/hr if the demand was there, as it usually is. MCA made huge profits off many raft rentals and the frequent raft shuttles down to El Cap, but DN is not interested. And NPS lets DN make important decisions for the Park !? Yikes. So both the current Concessionaire and NPS in Yosemite , the Superintendent, are allowing less normal routine access and education and public enjoyment in the super famous Yosemite Valley. Why does Yosemite get so many bench-warming embarrassment Superintendents, as if the public does not expect better? And the newspapers embarrassment of the federal court , self-proclaimed 'Hanging Judge' , terrorizing John Muir's "Cathedral" distracted car drivers and busy, SF-based, 5 hrs away, bus drivers?

The Curry Mtn. Shop fire was probably arson, due to the facts, but not properly prosecuted, DUE TO NPS INCOMPETENCE and Feds lack of will. The Glacier Point Hotel fire was also suspect. NPS ,for the 10 YEARS i lived in the Valley, could not catch the one major drug dealer everyone knew, supplying some of the low wage seasonal and permanent employees with marijuana, cocaine, mushrooms, etc., illegal drugs out of Oakland. From 1976 to 1980s , NPS lawenforcement rangers with cruisers and guns looked the other way at the large volume of just one company's speeding buses coming daily from SF to Merced town, and through Yosemite Valley to the Ahwahnee Hotel for lunch. It made one SF tour bus company owner a multi-millionaire, "lunch at the Ahwahnee Hotel" in his brochure,,,like "biodiesel" today is a $buzz word.

So any President's NPS is certainly flawed, sometimes major flawed. So should we be for this insanity and what it would do to change the Yosemite National Park experience, in Yosemite Valley along the Merced River, or should we all say 'bad idea!', and 'WSR de-list! before you kick all but the rich out'? NPS spent years and huge politcal capital with the 1970s YOSEMITE MASTER PLAN process,,,to end up chucking all the $M spent on similar beautiful maps and expensive brochures and all the public's con-ed 'valuable input'. NPS's summary was 'ban all cars'. What a waste of their time and our time and OUR tax MONEY !! I still have all that expensive to produce, "Master Plan" material in a cardboard box somewhere.

Why would President Obama 'OK' 2 new nuclear reactors in Georgia , after what happened in super high tech. Japan, right before his second election campaign??,,,and now allow the NPS to do something so stupid, again, as seriously propose dramatic action on the forgotten 1987 addition by Reagan's Congress of the Merced River in Yosemite Valley as a legally designated "WILD AND SCENIC RIVER" ? Why !?

If you too have fallen in love with John Muir's live and work place, Yosemite Valley, please join me in writing and calling President Obama, your Senator, any Senator!, your Representative, any Representative! and ask them to stop this NONSENSE immediately. De-list the Merced River, already Inside the Yosemite National Park's ultimate protection, as a "Wild and Scenic River" as it does Yosemite and us no good. We like and love, Yosemite National Park pretty much the way it is !

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 293 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I strongly urge the National Park Service to retain all the rides at the Curry Village Stables.

Many people cannot do the walking that is needed to see Yosemite and all that it has to offer. There are many experiences that will give people the opportunities to understand and appreciate Yosemite; and a major experience is being able to ride out of the Curry Village Stables. Riding from there gives a direct connection to values that are appreciated along the river corridor. It is important to have a range of visitor experiences available for the general public.

It is unfortunate, sad and downright terrible that horses are often considered as the first thing to limit when plans are made to cutback and change. I hope that does not happen here.

Thank you for considering my comment to retain all the rides from Curry Village Stables.

Correspondence ID: 294 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please do not change the current recreational use of the Park by stock users. We own three mules specifically for our camping/packing trips that we enjoy throughout the summer months. My husband and I, along with our grandchildren will not be able to enjoy our parks to the extent that we now do without our horse and mules. Please do not take this privilege away

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Correspondence ID: 295 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Parks Superintendent: I understand there is some discussion of removing stock from Yosemite National Park. That would be a travesty. I have horsecamped there many a time, and it is a life-sustaining experience. In addition, every hiker we've come across has been thrilled to see horses. Horses have roamed California for centuries...I cannot think why anyone could think they are environmentally inappropriate. PLease, please, do not take away this extraordinary experience for those of us who choose to explore with horses and mules.

Correspondence ID: 296 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent, I want to express my concern about any changes to the current recreational use of the Park by stock users and commercial stock organizations that operate stock operations within the Park. I believe that stock use is one of the most enjoyable activities that visitors to the Park can achieve, as the experience of riding a horse or a mule in the great west of the United States by visitors from all around the world. Those who imagined and relished the establishment of a Park were transported through this beautiful area by horse or mule. The Park was built with the help of these animals. Stock use in the Park is a very historic activity that should never be denied or restricted. As an avid backpacker, rock climber and mountain biker, who has pulled many wilderness permits from your office I feel the back country should also be enjoyed by those on horseback. I've never had any issues with stock traffic and have always enjoyed watching the teams pass. In my opinion, the proposed changes to the current recreational use of stock in the park are more red tape and bureaucracy. I ask that no action be taken to change the current activities of stock use in the Park as it would have a highly negative effect on the public's ability to enjoy the Park to its fullest. Respectfully, Small Business Owner

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Correspondence ID: 297 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Fax
Correspondence: Thank you for the terrific thought and energy that you offered the public regarding the Merced River Plan on Wednesday, March 28, 2012. I appreciate your call for input.

Characteristically, I visit the Park five times each year: October, March, June, July, and August. Thus, I gain a visitor's sense of the Park's changing seasons in terms of both nature and visitor population. The recent presentation of alternative concepts spoke of good ways to deal with traffic. The preliminary concepts generally approach the problem of traffic as meeting the supply. I suggest that the park take pro-active steps to reduce that supply in a positive manner.

-An increase in public transportation into the park could greatly reduce the number of private and rental cars. Granted, the park has no jurisdiction to encourage the private or international visitors to fly into the Fresno-Yosemite International Airport assuming they can get to the park. At the airport national and international visitors learn they must rent cars - a surprise, expense and addition to the glut of park traffic. I should hope that the park send an emissary (and members of the Yosemite Conservancy be urged to write) to the Oakhurst Chamber of Commerce and City Council to explain that it is not in the best business interests of Oakhurst with its population of 13,300 to limit the freedom of travel for individuals drawn nationally to a National Park and drawn internationally to the Fresno-Yosemite International Airport. For years I have had to fly from my home in Oregon into Sacramento where I join countless others who access Amtrak trains and busses into the park. I know well the stops on that route where I conduct business. (For example, I recently purchased a bicycle in Stockton.) Without the YARTS connection on the Fresno-Yosemite route, Oakhurst and other communities lose my business as well as they lose business from national and international patrons. As the park seeks to diminish retail establishments, Oakhurst and other towns along the Fresno-Yosemite route would do well to pick up that business by supplying park visitors with forgotten bathing suits, jackets, or hiking boots too bulky to fit into luggage. Informing Oakhurst business owners of the parks intent to diminish retail stores might give them pause to consider welcoming public transportation, specifcially the YARTS connection.

-As the general population ages, the park would do well to plan for a demographic increase in older "Baby Boomer" visitors. In-state and out-of-state older visitors may well prefer to avoid hands-on driving into the park. As is, without the YARTS link, the current lack of public transportation for the Fresno-Yosemite International Airport could foreseeably become a litigious diversity issue as non-driving international, senior, and handicapped persons are subjected to public transportation routes that are twice as long, tiring, and expensive than need be. Granted, the National Park Service has no jurisdiction to ameliorate this injustice, but the Yosemite Conservancy together with such organizations as Earthjustice might launch an "educational" campaign to establish more age-appropriate public transportation routes.

-Rather than establishing regulations to limit the size and weight of rented and privately owned recreational vehicles, the park could establish roadway physical barriers akin to speed bumps. For example, the height of the Park View Tunnel currently prohibits moving vans. A few strategically placed acute angle roadway turns might relegate over-sized vehicles to parking lots

outside the traffic-congested valley.

-Once into the park, an increase in bicycle friendly amenities would help visitors get around. Each Alternative Concept whould call for a relocation of bicycle rental stands to outside of the river corridor. The number of such stands could be increased to encourage more visitor use by bike. As the city of Portland, OR, is building lanes and roads exclusively for bicycles and trolleys, Yosemite National Park could enable visitors to bicycle into and around the valley from strategically placed parking lots. Establishing bike paths in the manner of North- and Southside Drives would encourage visitors to leave cars in lots at the mouth of the valley. Establishing bike rentals near a west-end parking lot (West Valley Day Use Parking Area as in Concept 5) could also help eliminate cars from North and Southside Drives.

-The elimination of the retail business, the Sport Shop, in Yosemite Village, would open that space for bike service (not selling or renting bikes). Servicing visitor-owned bikes could encourage bike use and safety. The kickstands, bells, and odd bike parts now sold at the Sport Shop could be retailed at the remaining Mountain Shop. The elimination of the bus maintenance complex behind the Village Store will create the need for currently supplied free compressed air for bike tires. The attendants at the bus maintenance complex have always been patient, kind, and knowledgeable, and willing to fix little things on my granddaughter's and my bikes. It would be greatt to make wonderful currently unpublicized service more visible in the place of the Sport Shop.

Thank you again for all efforts to maintain and enhance the Merced River environment and values. Please feel free to contact my office. Thank you again for your invitation for visitor input.

Correspondence ID: 298 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I am a native o Yosemite. I wrote and published a book in August 2011 entitled [redacted] (1000 copies sold to date)

I am familiar with the background leading up to the task which you are undertaking. I wrote two chapters about it in my book. I have spoken to the plaintiffs in the Merced River litigation and to the two superintendents most closely involved, Dave Mihalic and Mike Tollefson. I have read the opinion of the court and the settlement agreement and attempted to digest both, not an easy exercise even for an attorney with 40 years experience. I have heard the presentation of the alternatives at the Yosemite Conservancy Spring Forum. I had planned to attend the workshop at Wawona April 14 which was snowed out.

The planners have my sympathy. They are not startling from scratch. They have inherited a potentially impossible assisgnment, with a background too convoluted and riddled with errors to be understood by the general public.

All of the five alternatives proposed contain points with which I disagree, often strongly. I understand that this can be ameliorated by mixing and matching. The plaintiffs will probably not accept any alternatives except 1 and 2, which are the most onerous to the visitor. They can be expected to go back to court if they do not get what they want. The mediation provision in the settlement agreement may slow them down but not stop them. In my opinion Alternative 5 is the least invasive.

The goal of "protecting" the river corridor by inserting WRSA guidelines into Yosemite management for the first time is based on three false premises 1) the visitors are the enemy, rather than beneficiaries of a public trust; 2) visitor services run by the concessionaire are "commercial" and therefore not appropriate for Yosemite; 3) "preservation" means protecting scenery at the expense of visitor enjoyment, the opposite of what teh Organic Act of 1916 provides. The NPS has consitently rejected these false premises in the planning process.

At page 11 the planners have "dismissed from futher analysis, removal of employee housing, commercial services and infrastructure in Yosemite Valley" and other extreme measures sought by plantiffs, noting that these concerns belong in a management plan for Yosemite Valley, not a river protection plan. This is precisely the proper approach. However, after dismissing the items noted on page 11, planners have reintroduced them as proposals in all of the alternatives. I do not understand the reasoning.

The river corridor can be protected from degradations and adverse impacts at relatively modest cost without removal of infrastructure or historic bridges. I suppor tany restoration effort which does not involve removing infrastructure.

The WRSA does not mandate reversal of recreational activities in an area designated recreational. This should be the end of discussion on this issues.

The planners will have to deal with user capactiy, not because it is a high priority but because the court mandated a quantitative standard. All that has to be done is to consult "experts" and pick a number of day use visitors permitted to enter Yosemite Vlaley in private vehicles. Overnight accomodations and campgrounds need not be reduced because their numbers will be well below any limit. The least expensive and most reasonable approach is a reservation system on cars entering Yosemite Valley for day use. Cars, not people are the problem. There are obvious and serious problems with this approach, and there will be opposition from some quarters, but the problmes are not insurmountable and pale by comparison to problems created by other approaches. Plannners need to confront reality, stop avoiding the problem, and realize that it may have come to this, at least in peak periods.

It has been shown over and over again that no plan will please everyone and there will be no consensus. Whatever planners do

or do not do, someone will be unhappy and possibly unhappy enough to sue. However, the WRSA mandates a plan, which the court has required within a time line, so a plan must be produced. All planners can do in this dismal scenario is exercise comon sense and dispose of the WRSA requirements as simply and inexpensively as possible so you can move on to a management plan for Yosemite Valley. To date the NPS has done an acceptable job of managing Yosemite. Yosemite is not broken and does not need to be fixed by drastic solutions. What Yosemite needs is to be saved from its self appointed saviors.

Correspondence ID: 299 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Shasta Trinity Backcountry Horsemen Recreational Groups
Received: Apr,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I am a member of The Backcountry Horsemen of California and I want to express my concern about any changes to the current recreational use of Park by stock users and commercial stock organizations that operate stock operations within the Park. I believe that stock use is one of the most enjoyable activities that visitors to the Park can achieve, as the experience of riding a horse or a mule is the great west of the United States by visitors from all around the world.

I have written a poem about the use of stock in wilderness areas. It is attached. Please use it in what ever way you wish.

Those who imiagined and relished the establishment of a Park were transported through this beautiful area by horse or mule. I am partially handicapped and cannot access the parks or wilderness areas with out my horse. The Park was built with the help of these animals. Stock use in the Park is a very historic activity that should never be denied or restricted.

I ask that no action be taken to change the current activities of stock use in the Park as it would have a highly negative effect on the public's ability to enjoy the Park to its fullest. Please enjoy and circulate my poem.

Respectfully,

Member of the Shasta Trinity Backcountry Horsemen and Fish and Game Water Quality Biologist, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 300 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: My husband and I want to express our concern about any changes to the current recreational use of the park by stock users and commercial stock organizations that operate stock operations within the park. We believe that stock use is not only one of the most enjoyable experiences a visitor may have but have first-hand experience that this is what they want! Commercial packing is the only option for many who cannot otherwise hike through the parks. The experience of riding a horse or a mule in the great west of the United States by old and young alike is one they will never forget!

My husband and I are not commercial packers. We own three mules specifically for our camping/packing trips that we take throughout the summer months. Our mules seem to enjoy the beauty of the wilderness as much as we do!

Those who imagined and relished the establishment of a park were transported through this beautiful area by horse or mule. The park was built with the help of these animals. Stock use in the park is a very historic activity that should never be denied or restricted.

We ask that no action be taken to change the current activities of stock use in the park as it would have a highly negative effect on the public's ability to enjoy the park to its fullest. My husband and I would no longer be able to enjoy our parks to the extent that we now do without our mules, nor would our grandchildren. Please do not take this privilege away from us and our future generations.

Correspondence ID: 301 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,25,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: The park should continue to allow horses and mules within its borders. The park was developed with the help of these animals.

And many search and rescue operations have to use equines to help with stranded or in danger individuals.

You and your committees take issues too far in the extreme for returning parks to their 'natural' states. And then park management pays for asphalt trails and calls that better usage for patrons. things are out of line, and lack common sense.

Horses have about the same effect on lands as deer.

If visitors fall in love with nature while riding a horse, as well as hiking, what could be nicer?

Correspondence ID: 302 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,23,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I had the opportunity of a lifetime when I was afforded the experience of joining a ranger led hike to four of the six Yosemite High Sierra Camps two years ago. One of the camps we visited was the Merced lake High Sierra Camp. What a delightful, memorable 2-night stay at the camp! We enjoyed visits to the lake and to the river area above the camp. We alos enjoyed the hospitality of the camp staff and the comraderie of the other guests at the camp all reveling int he glory of our surroundings.

I would not have been able to experience the high sierra back country had it not been for the high sierra camps. Please consider leaving the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp as is.

Correspondence ID: 303 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,23,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I am an enthusiastic supporter of the High Sierra Camps experience. My son and I hiked the entire loop a few summers ago. He was thrilled. He kept saying he had no idea how beautiful the park was. I am sure he will introduce his children to the High Sierra Camps in the future - if there is a future for the camps. Our layover day was at Merced Lake Camp. It was a high light of the trip.

I am quite concerned about the proposal to close Merced Lake Camp as outlined in the Merced River Plan.

Please consider keeping Merced Lake Camp as it is. It's closure or downsizing would be a major loss.

Correspondence ID: 304 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Backcountry Horsemen of California Recreational Groups
Received: Apr,23,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: The Backcountry Horsemen of California want to express our concern about any changes to the current recreational use of the Park by stock users and commercial stock organizations that operate stock operations within the Park. We believe that stock use is one of the most enjoyable activities that visitors to the Park can achieve, as the experience of riding a horse or a mule in the great west of the United States by visitors from all around the world.

Those who imagined and relished the establishment of a Park were transported through this beautiful area by horse or mule. The Park was built with the help of these animals. Stock use in the Park is a very historic activity that should never be denied or restricted.

We ask that no action be taken to change the current activities of stock use in the Park as it would have a highly negative effect on the public's ability to enjoy the Park to its fullest.

Respectfully,

[redacted] Vice President - Public Lands Backcountry Horsemen of California

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Correspondence ID: 305 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,23,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: In the summer of 2010 I had the extraordinary experience of hiking the Yosemite High Camp Loop. It's not to be missed! I had the opportunity to view wild and isolated beauty that I would never have had a chance to see otherwise and at the same time I had a comfortable, warm bed and amazing, fresh food which prepared me for the next day's challenge! I'm sorry to admit that I would not attept the same hike if I had to sleep on the ground, carry the bedding and eat freeze dried food.

The camps had wonderful staff and rangers and were efficiently run and a great reward to some exhausting days. One of the camps I most remember was set beside the Merced River where we sat beside the beautiful falls and soaked our feet and regrouped for the hike to the last camp at Volgelsang. A yearling bear was drawn to the smell of dinner (he was easily chased off) and after a ranger led talk under the stars we slept to the sound of the rushing water. We spent a whole day and two nights enjoying this lovely camp leaving totally refreshed and ready for the 3,000 feet elevation gain to come.

I recently read that Merced Lake Camp is being considered for some changes that may include closure. I want to voice my opposition to that possibility, it is one of the jewels of the High Camp loop and no other stop on the loop was more welcome or made the indelible impression of that camp. Please continue to offer Merced lake Camp to all future hikers so they may enjoy its comforts and experience the beauty of the river and lake.

Correspondence ID: 306 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I am writing today to provide comment on the 5 alternative proposed Merced River Plans, specifically to objet to any of such alternatives that include removal or limitation of the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. I consider each of the High Sierra Camps in Yosemite National Park a jewel of our National Park System that provide unique backcountry experiences to visitors. As the center point of a recent backpacking trip with my then 9 and 11 year old daughters, I can vouch for the special nature of the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp and the lasting impression it left on all three of us. To eliminate or limit others from similar adventures in the backcountry would be a travesty.

Enclosed with this letter please find a letter from [redacted], age 12, and [redacted], age 10, about their experience last summer at Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. I also enclose a few select photographs from the two days we were lucky enough to spend there. The life long memories each of us took away from our time at Merced Lake are clear from their letters, and I hope you bear them in mind as the various Merced River Plans are considered.

Last August, [redacted] and I participated in a ranger guided hike that took us from Tuolumne Meadows Lodge to Vogelsang High Sierra Camp, then to Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, to Sunrise High Sierra Camp, and them back to civilization at Tenaya Lake. I lack the ability to express fully in words the effect the trip had on each of us. Suffice to say, we took away common, as well as unique, memories that will last us a lifetime. We were lucky enough to make the trip at the height of the wildflower bloom, which provided a beautiful grounding to the massive landscapes and vistas we hiked through over our 5 day trip. Each of the three High Sierra Camps we visited brought with it a unique flavor and setting. Merced Lake, as the center stay for the trip, I believe is critical to hikers taking advantage of the High Sierra Camp loop system.

We spent two nights at Merced Lake, and I remember one point in particular made during the warm talk from our camp hosts following dinner the first evening - Merced Lake High Sierra Camp has the distinction of being the furthest point in Yosemite National Park from any road in the Park where you can stay at an established camp. Aside from a few jokes about the difficulty of medical attention that far into the wilderness, it was not lost on my daughters that their resting place for the next two nights was something few are able to experience. This realization made our stay all the more meaningful.

There is a unique community formed almost instantaneously between fellow hikers at a High Sierra Camp that would be negatively impacted by the loss of the camp at Merced Lake. The family style dining arrangements led us every night to make new friends - the first topic of conversation being, "Where are you headed?" and "Where have you been?" Paths crossed at the High Sierra Camps as hikers heading in different directions around the loop met and shared stories at dinner. The social interaction among hikers fostered by the High Sierra Camps should not be curtailed.

To remove Merced Lake from the system would significantly limit use of the backcountry trail system to High Sierra Camp users as a loop. A trip to Sunrise originating near Tenaya Lake or other trailhead would be unlikely to lead a trip to Merced lake and then on to Vogelsang for High Sierra Camp hikers. The hike would simply be too long for those utilizing the High Sierra Camps to travel from Sunrise to Vogelsang or vice versa along the backcountry trails.

While I certainly understand the need to tprotect the Merced River , I fail to see how elimination of the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp will significantly increase protection of the river corrirdor. The camp is open for an extremely short period of time during the year. Moreover, guests are limited to 60 in the tent cabins, plus staff and those staying in the backpacker's campground. In terms of impact on the river, much more can be gained by focusing efforts on locations that presently receive the highest number of visitors, not the other way around. Efforts in the Yosemite Valley would seem to have much more impact than elimination of a 60 cabin camp in the backcountry.

The history and rarity of the High Sierra Camps argues for keeping them, not eliminating one of the oldest. I trust in the wisdom of Stephen Mather in creating the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp in 1916. The backcountry is a moving experience, but also a daunting challenge for many. The ability to arrive at the end of a day hiking in the backcountry to a cot in a canvas tent and a hot meal provides an avenue to enjoy a wilderness area like Merced Lake for those either unable or uncomfortable with totally self contained backpacking. One of the primary goals of our National Park System is to foster experiences in appreciation of nature. The High Sierra Camps make the trek. Add in the opportunity for ranger guided multi-day trip and you create a wonderful opportunity to learn about the history, ecology, geology, etc., of Yosemite. The loss of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp would be a tragic loss of a significant part of the High Sierra Camp system that would take away a wonderful opportunity to experience the backcountry.

Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is approaching its 100th birthday. While on our trip, a family reunion made up of three generations was moving through the High Serra Camp loop alongside us. It is unlikely that all three generations would be able to enjoy that trip together without the High Sierra Camps. Watching grandparents, parents, and kids hike through the backcountry together gave me something to look forward to. Our family only discovered the magic of the High Sierra Camps in 2011. We plan to return as often as we can win the lottery for a slot at the camps. I fervently hope to hold a family reunion at the High Sierra Camps when I have grandchildren of my own. That trip will not be possible without Merced lake as a stopping point in our loop. Please do everything you can to retain the Merced Lake as a stopping point in our loop. Please do everything you can to retain the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp in each alternative for the Merced River Plan being considered. To do otherwise strikes me as analogous to locking away a Van Gogh in a safe so that we know it is preserved, but so that no one can appreciate it. That is not the purpose of the National Parks.

Correspondence ID: 307 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,23,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I wanted to express my personal opinion regarding certain aspects of the Merced River Plan with particular reference to the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

I have downloaded and reviewed the Workbook on the Merced River Plan. I appreciate this opportunity to participate in the process. I also appreciate all of the efforts that have gone and will go into achieving the goals of the plan. Many hours have been spent by many individuals in getting the plan to its current stage in the planning process and many more will be devoted to moving it along.

There will be/are differing viewpoints on all aspects of the plan. That is seen by the breath of the Preliminary Alternative Concepts. Increase capacity to 10,200 overnight visitors (Alt 5) in the river corridor or decrease that number to half of that (5,100 in Alt 1). Reduce lodging in the Valley by more than 50% (1,100 currently to 480 in Alt 1) or increase it by 200 units (Alt 5). Restoration of up to 336 acres (Alt 1) or only half of that (Alt 5).

When I reviewed the plan I saw that the majority of the plan's focus was where the action is - the valley. Rightly so as the human influence is strongest there and further downriver.

The high country is important to me. I have done several loop trips and camped independently (with permits) in the backcountry. The opportunity afforded to those who are able to experience the majesty of the backcountry by maintaining the High Sierra Camps is precious.

The historic significance of the Merced High Sierra Camp cannot be denied. Created by the very first direct of the NPS, the Merced High Sierra Camp has been for almost 100 years the backbone of the backcountry camps. Steven mather would certainly bemoan any discussion to close the camp.

That camp along with the others has provided thousands of visitors with experiences that were never possible in the Valley. Albeit not the most self-reliant of 'campers', most would never have ventured into the backcountry without the facilities that the camps provide.

If one of the goals is to allow for the infrastructure necessary to support public use, the Merced High Sierra Camp should be maintained.

The historic value of the camp is undeniable. Why not preserve and protect that historically significant part of Yosemite's past?

As an active supporter of Yosemite as both a regular visitor, a promoter to all I encounter and a member of the LeConte Society of the Yosemite Conservancy, I ask that the Merced High Sierra Camp be kept open.

Correspondence ID: 308 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,23,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is a very special place for its beauty, its history, and its inspiration to all of us to work to preserve the value of wilderness in the High Sierra. I stayed at Merced Lake High Sierra Camp for four days this summer, taking day hikes to Washburn Lake and Echo Valley, finally hiking out past Nevada Fall to the Valley. I talked with young staff members who were having the experience of their lives at Merced Camp and with independent hikers who gloried in the magnificence of their surroundings. I talked with people from the guided groups who were new to the wilderness, new to California even, an they said they could not have seen this beauty without Merced Lake and the other camps. The National Park Service gives us this opportunity to be at home for a short time in this incredible natural environment.

After many years as a backpacker enjoying the serenity of the Sierra, I can no longer carry a heavy pack. Four years ago, after a long time away from the mountains, I decided to try Yosemite HIgh Camps. I signed up for the seven-day trip in 2007, knowing no one in the group. Ranger Dave Dahler was our leader; I like Ranger Dave immensely and was amazed at the breadth of his knowledge. What a joy! I was again able to hike the beloved trails of Yosemite National Park.

Mike Vanian led my 2008 trip and I continued to learn about the birds, the wildlife and the ecology of Yosemite National Park. I could not hike in 2009 because I broke my leg. This year I was back at it with Ranger Dick Ewart. My store of knowledge increased again as Ranger Dick talked about the forests, the geology and the history of these spectacular mountains. I could never have had these experiences without the National Park Service maintaining the Yosemite High Sierra Camps. I plan to sign up again for 2012; I was not chosen in the lottery so maybe I can get in on a cancellation. I could do an independent hike now because I have learned the trails well, but I would miss the thoughtful friendliness and camaraderie of the group and the kindness and the knowledge of the ranger.

I could not go at all without the Yosemite High Camps. I will be 84 in 2012 and I do greatly appreciate the fact that cold lemonade, a cot and blankets, a tent and delicious food await me at each camp. Merced Lake is a special camp because it is the

most challenging, regardless of which trail you follow, and I came home bursting with pride that I had made it.

You could choose to keep the Yosemite high country for those with the strength and stamina to reach it, or you can continue to provide places for all groups of people, accomodations for those just learning about the beauty of the Sierra, places for families with small children, and places such as the High Camps for those who want to hike but not backpack. I am glad the National Park Service continues to support a wide variety of ways to enjoy our beautiful natural places. I came home and rejoined both the Yosemite Conservancy and the National Parks COnservation Association, I was so inspired. Please do all in your power to continue to support this diversity of possible experiences for Americans of all sorts. Merced lake and all of the Yosemite High Camps are an important and positive aspect of your service to all of us and I thank you heartily.

Correspondence ID: 309 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,26,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Has NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? No!!! Concepts #4 our of 5 are unreasonable.

-Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Who determines the degree of "adverse impact and degredation? Isin't that a subjective opinion? waht scientific, not abstract, information and data do you have that supports the elimination of Wawona Stables, CV Ice RInk, rafting in #1,2,4, CV Stables in #1,2,3 and Merced Lake High Sierra Camp in #1,2, and 3. I want facts NOT feelings.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #1 Is extreme and should not be considered...period.

-Feedback on Alternative Conetp #3 WAWONA STABLES Concepts #1,2,3,4,5 all show the elimination of Wawona Stables. Why? If Wawona Stables goes shouldn't the Pioneer Village also go? They are both historical landmarks. Sholdn't the NPS stables/horsecamp in Wawona also be eliminated? I don't understand the logic.

CURRY VILLAGE STABLES Concepts #1,2,3 all show the elimination/restoration of Curry Village Stables. Why? What scientific data are you using to support this exclusion? Trail damage? Giardia? Stock Waste? Come up with a comprehensive plan to MANAGE stock use including trail rides, not eliminate them. Improve the trails not exclude certain groups. Stock use in the park system has been an integral part of YNP history, e.g. John Muir rode a mule for transport. The calvary had an outpost at Merced Lake. Stock provides less athletic visitors access to the High Sierra Camps. Is NPS willing to deny ADA by excluding them an opportunity to ride into the back country of Yosemite?

MERCED LAKE HSC Concepts #1,2,3 all show the elimination/restoration of Merced Lake HSC. Why? Is it NPS's intention to use the Merced River designation as a Wild and Scenic River as a vehicle to eliminate all stock use and all High Sierra Camps from the park? The Merced Lake HSC is part of the HSC loop trips. By eliminating this camp then it will cause Sunrise and Vogelsang HSC to become terminus cmaps. End result appears to be the elimination of all HSCs. Over 13,000 night stays occur annually at the HSCs. WIth a braod brush, and wtihout any sold arguement of fact Concepts #1,2,3 signal the beginning of the end.

COMMERCIAL RAFTING Concepts #1,2,4 all show the elimination of Commercial Rafting. What is the difference between private flotation devices and commercial flotation devices? The commercial rafting operator provides orientation to all rafters using their services. In that orientation they provide information about river safety, resource protection, stewardship, and history. A private raftert recieves no education or interpretation and are left to theri own devices.

CURRY VILLAGE ICE RINK The removal of the CV Ice Rink does not make sense. How does the Ice Rink adversely impact the River?

-Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered? Keep the Merced River corridor as is without elimiantions or reductions in services of both NPS or commercial. Commerical operations provide the resources ($$$) that support the Dept of Interior (NPS). Eliminate the commercial operations and now you have a park with less funding and accessibility only for the elistists. Draw up reasonable management plans for stock use, commercial river rafting, and peak summer traffic and parking controls. Don't exclude the majority of park visitors their opportunity to experience the park using other means of transportation e.g. trail rides, rafting, open air trams.

NPS needs to go back to the drawing board. Write alternatives that make sense. Don't cherry pick. Be fair and reasonable. It would apprear that concepts #1 through 4 pander to the High Sierra Hikers Association not to the 99.9985% of visitors to the park.

Correspondence ID: 310 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Put the site-specific conept development plans along the wall on the web site.

Consider eliminating the bus/road to Mirror Lake and making it a trail.

Develop aaccess to Ribbon Falls to dispurse day use.

Donsider area east of Ahwahnee for additional camping - why is it "exempt" from use?

Correspondence ID: 311 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Has NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? Almost. More is needed on expanded public transit access. We need an alternative expanding public transit INTO the valley form outside sufficiently so that use capacity (# of visitors) could actually be expanded w/o additional impact to the ORVs in terms of air polluition, traffic congestions, added parking.

-Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Probably, if genuine, regorous user capacity controls are truly implemented. If public transit (both within the Valley increased and West Valley) AND visitor access from outside the park is vigorously expanded, and positively marketed. Unless public transit access is better (more seriously) emphasised, stated goals may not be fullfilled.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #1 I like this overall. I especially am pleasted that NPS has included removal of Yosemite Lodge! Bravo! This complex of buildings and parking lots plunked down in the center, in the very heart of the Valley scenic majesty, has been a woeful eyesore for too long. Its mid-range accomodations [unreadable word] be made up by more privately-run units, motel type, outside the park. Yosemite Valley is too valuable to [unreadable word] the lodge is urban sprawl. But-keep part of Houskeeping- as in Alt. 3. Also do not reduce camping. Regarding AFFORDABLE accomdations when Lodge is removed: 1) Why does the Ahwhanee have to be SO expensive? It can't cost THAT much more to provde a bed for someone there then in the lodge! Cut its costs! 2)Housekeeping Camp is a popular, affordable place to stay. In the name of environmental justice- keep as much of it as possible.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #2 I support removal of the 2 bridges- also [unreadble word] or #1- to enhance free-flowing river values. This Alt. is not as good as #1 regarding Yosemite Lodge. It removes only 4 units. Take away the whole thing (see comment #1) or as much as possible. It's too close to the river and it's just plain UGLY. The reduction of camping in this ALt. is not good. Camping should stay at least at current level and preferably expanded by 100-200 (as in Alt. 3). Day-use reservation (also in #1) is a good tool to manage user capacity.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #3 I support its proposed on Housekeeping Camp and on expanded capacity. It's removal of 2 bridges is ok as presumably these too are the ones with the owrst impact on the river. But all 3 bridges could go- as in #s 1 and 2. Keep Merced Lake High Sierra Camp at reduced level to reduce its footprint. Also offer simpler, lower-level services there for reduced impact. (Reduce footprint and service of ALL the High Sierra Camps to match).

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #4 Nothing particuarly exciting here to support. (Not sure where the "roundabouts" are- but projected next to Sentinal Bridge- there don't help much. Superficial- just an excuse for new construction (which no doubt they will love) but doesn't get at basic problem of TOO MANY CARS! I don't feel there are too many people, just too many cars. Go to the Valley any summer day, look around at the traffic and you'll see!

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #5 Allows too many people. I don not support a new parking area. Parking should not be expanded- letting in more cars just leads to more congestion, pollution and a perceived urban clutter- the thing people came here to get away from. Instead, expand YARTS and other transit shuttle system to reduce # of cars in the Valley w/o reducing visitors necessarily. Yosemite should be for people, not cars. RVs particuarly lead to crowding, congestions. NO new campgrounds for them!

-Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered? One that considers significantly expanded public transi, to displace a lot of day-use automobile access. The cost could be [unreadable word] by [unreadable word] entrance fee for automobiles. How about an alternative prohibiting large RVs from entering the valley? This might need to be [unreadable word] with expanded out-of-valley parking for them.

Correspondence ID: 312 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Sierra Club Tehepite Chapter Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,22,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: [redacted] Fresno, CA 93755 > 20 April 2012 > > Superintendent > Yosemite National Park > Attn: Merced River Plan > P.O. Box 577 > Yosemite, CA 95389 > > This is being sent to <yose_planning@nps.gov>. > > Sir: > > These are my personal comments on the Merced River Plan Preliminary > Alternative Concepts Workbook, dated Spring 2012. > > I wish to express support for the comments submitted by the Tehipite > Chapter of the Sierra Club. I am in total agreement with those comments, > and am incorporating them by reference into my own personal comments. The > Tehipite Chapter comments are pasted below for ease of reference. My > personal comments

either address subjects not addressed by the Tehipite > Chapter, or go into more detail. > > In many meetings the NPS has stated a great concern that the final MRP be > able to withstand challenges from unhappy citizens or officials. To this > end, you have expressed an intent to produce a plan which is based upon > adequate data, sound science, and a solid rationale. However, it is not > clear from the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook that this is > happening. > > A case in point is the heavy emphasis on increased camping in Alternatives > 3, 4, and 5. This clearly appears to be a politically motivated response > to public pressure, with no logical basis. The terms "arbitrary and > capricious" come to mind. I realize those words carry a lot of baggage, > but the point is that you are at risk of challenge if your recommendations > cannot be supported by anything other than, "This is what people are > demanding." > > I note that much of the proposed increase in camping is within the > floodway portion of the flood plain. In considering the impact of high > water, the focus seems to be exclusively on flood plain. But maintaining > the floodway is probably a more important consideration. If developments > are permitted in the floodway, it will alter the flood plain. > Developments in a backwater would have less impact. Developments in the > floodway are going to impact the required "free flowing" requirement of > WSRA. Some of the proposed camping is clearly in floodway areas, and > probably not permissible under WSRA. > > I note that development of additional campgrounds outside of Yosemite > Valley was dismissed from further analysis. This was unfortunate, because > what happens outside of Yosemite Valley clearly can have an impact within > Yosemite Valley. Increasing camping capacity outside the Valley, while > reducing camping inside the Valley, would be one way of reducing impacts > on the river and on the Valley. Having a better intra-Park bus > system would help to make out-of-Valley camping more attractive. > > While the various options under consideration for Housekeeping Camp are > encouraging, none of them seem to address the biggest concern I have heard > regarding that facility. And that is the visual impact upon visitors who > pass by on Southside Drive. Many people find this quite offensive, yet > the planning process seems to be doing nothing to address it. I realize > that the experience which Housekeeping Camp offers is especially appealing > to a category of visitors which the NPS is attempting to reach out to. > But that is no excuse to ignore the visual impacts. > > I, and others, have repeatedly expressed a concern that the role of > transportation should be foundational in the planning process. At one > point, one of the MRP project managers made it clear that you cannot > address user capacity without transportation being foundational. But she > was released after one year, and since then the role of transportation in > the process has been gradually diminished. I strongly feel that this has > been a very large mistake, and, if it is not reversed, the final plan will > certainly be subject to challenge. > > The ideas put forth in some of the Alternatives for the Yosemite Lodge > area are commendable. I believe that the present footprint of the Lodge > area is excessive, and represents an inefficient use of prime land. If > the facility were re-configured, some of the space made available could be > used for parking and camping which presently occupy more sensitive areas > in other parts of the east Valley. I especially like the idea of clearing > out the post office/bike stand/snack bar/swimming pool complex---that is > an especially ugly area right in the heart of one of the most visible > portions of the Lodge complex. > > The rationale for removal of the Sugar Pine bridge seems a little strange. > On the one hand, it is stated that the bridge is interfering with the > natural flow of the river. On the other hand, it is stated that if it is > found that removal of the bridge results in an increased risk to the > Ahwahnee, then rip-rap will be added to protect the Ahwahnee! (This > statement may have been made during a site visit.) If you really wish to > prevent the river from meandering, then why remove a structure which is > preventing the meandering? The NPS acknowledges that other measures could > be taken to improve the river flow, such as removing the road berm between > the Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee bridges. NPS pointed out that removing the > berm would result in flooding of the bicycle trail during part of the > year, as though that was a reason not to remove the berm. There are other > trails which get flooded seasonally, and I see nothing wrong with that. > It is a poor reason to use for not removing the berm. > > Totally aside from whether the bridges should be removed or not, removing > them would be a tremendously costly undertaking. I cannot help but recall > how the NPS made a major production out of removing the remains of the old > concrete pedestrian bridge at Happy Isles. That project was studied > endlessly, and it was not easy to achieve the removal without damaging the > river. And that project was picayune compared to what would be required > to remove something as large as the Sugar Pine bridge. If money would be > available for such a major undertaking, it is my belief that the money > would be put to far better use improving Yosemite Valley in other ways. > You could achieve far more meaningful results elsewhere with the same > amount of money. In other words, it is my belief that removal of the > bridges would not be cost-effective. > > To reiterate, I fully support the below comments, which were submitted by > the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. > > Thank you for going through these additional steps, not normally taken, in > the planning process. I am sure that it will result in a final plan which > will be better than it would have been had you engaged the public only to > the minimal extent required by law. > > George Whitmore > (contact information above) > > Comments submitted separately by the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club: > ---------- > The Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook is very well organized and > easy to read. We may not agree with some of the content, but at least it > is easy to find. Or, in the case of what is lacking from the document, it > is easy to determine that, also. We commend the people responsible for > producing this reader-friendly document > > According to NEPA and the CEQA Guidelines, the requirement for public > involvement is quite limited. We appreciate the fact that, throughout > this process, you have been going well beyond what is legally required in > an attempt to involve the public. The big advantage of your having > produced the Workbook is that it provides one more opportunity to try to > get the Alternatives crafted in an acceptable way before the DEIS is > released. > > As you know, the Tehipite Chapter has participated extensively in the > Merced River planning processes over the years. Based on that lengthy > history, we have observed a gradual improvement in the Park Service > efforts during the past two or three years. It has gotten to the point > that we actually have a certain amount of optimism that the finished plan > will be a good one this time around. That having been said, we do feel > that there is room for improvement, and we offer the following comments > toward that end. Although we may not make it clear everywhere, most of > our comments pertain to the Yosemite Valley segment of the river. > > ---------- > > USER CAPACITY AND FOOTNOTE FIVE: > > The NPS has come up with proposed limits on how many people per day > (including overnight) would be allowed in Yosemite Valley under various > scenarios. Alternatives are suggested for 14,200, 14,900, 17,000, > 20,500, and 24,000. These numbers are arrived at using parking space as > the limiting factor. We do not believe that basing the number of people > on parking capacity in itself addresses the need to base actions on > impacts to natural resources. > > Dealing with user capacity this way just leads us along the same old rut > of thinking that everything in the Valley has to stay there, and all we > need to do is provide parking to accommodate the demand for access to > inappropriate facilities and services. > > Basing user capacity on parking avoids the whole thrust of the Ninth > Circuit Court ruling, which was epitomized by the court's oft-quoted > Footnote Five. The NPS was contending that they have been protecting > natural values all along, and don't need to do anything differently. In > response to that, the Court asked how the huge amount of facilities in the > Valley (garages, corporate offices, swimming pools, horse rides, raft > rentals, redundant gift shops, etc., etc.) does anything to protect > natural values. Footnote Five implied that the NPS was going to have to > change how it manages the Valley. > > Considering the implications of Footnote Five, the process should have > started with re-examining the facilities and services offered in the park, > which in turn would make it easier to examine the actual number of > employees

needed to operate resource-appropriate facilities and services > in the park, which in turn would likely self-regulate how many people are > in Yosemite at one time. We appreciate that the NPS apparently has done > this to some extent, but we believe the process needs to be applied more > rigorously. > > ---------- > > STRUCTURING OF ALTERNATIVES: > > NPS needs to drastically revise the way they are presenting the numerous > possible management actions. The NEPA process typically breaks down when > an agency presents formal Alternatives in the Draft EIS. Failure to > present a suitable range of Alternatives in an acceptable way has been a > frequent problem. In the present case, there are problems with the way > these "preliminary Alternative concepts" have been presented. > > Data and science should provide the foundation for a process of arriving > at Alternatives. We believe this has been done to some extent, but the > process needs to be clarified in the DEIS. > > Hopefully the many different possible management actions will be presented > in a way that enables people to say what they really want, instead of > being confronted with false choices created by the packaging of management > actions in illogical combinations. If the DEIS is adequately presented, > these personal preferences would be based on clearly reasoned choices, > responsive to WSRA and other laws, and supported by study. > > Management actions which are not relevant to user capacity should be > treated differently than those that do relate to user capacity. For > example, without regard to whether or not the Sugar Pine bridge should be > removed, it doesn't seem that the decision has anything to do with user > capacity. But, in the Preliminary Alternatives, bridge removal has been > linked to user capacity---fewer people is associated with more bridge > removal, whereas if there are more people then fewer bridges would be > removed. We don't see the connection. (That is just one example.) > > We believe that the list of "actions common to all alternatives" needs to > be expanded considerably, and the list needs to be clearly set aside so > the citizen can focus on what truly differentiates one Alternative from > another. If an idea is a good one, and is not related to user capacity, > why shouldn't it appear in all Alternatives? Restoration of wet meadows > is another example. If a meadow is wet, it should be restored regardless > of which Alternative is being discussed. (This is just one example.) > > ---------- > > GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE SPECIFICS WHICH FOLLOW: > > Within the constraints of protecting the visitor experience and the other > resources, we advocate maximizing the opportunity for people to experience > the Park. Limiting access should be the last resort. Improved > management would minimize the need for limiting the number of people > > The Workbook includes a broad range of possibilities for the plan, much of > it intended to improve management of congestion on busy days. If crowding > is not controlled, it would be necessary to resort to day-use permits for > visitors, something we would like the Park Service to avoid if possible. > Within the constraints of protecting the visitor experience and the other > resources, we would like to see the Park made available to the greatest > number of people possible. We encourage the NPS to select options that > manage crowding in the park to ensure that day-use permits are the last > resort. These options would include: (1) increased public transportation > in and around the park and its gateway communities, (2) the use of an > Intelligent Transportation System for real-time information about park > conditions, (3) roundabouts at key intersections, (4) overflow parking > lots which are small and dispersed, (5) and minimally invasive > infrastructure such as boardwalks in meadows. > > Our support for some of these specifics is explained, and qualified, in > more detail below. > > ---------- > > SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT OPTIONS DIRECTLY RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION: > > The Workbook's relative silence on the subject of transportation seems > inexplicable. If it is not addressed in the remaining NEPA processes, the > final MRP will inevitably be seriously flawed. > > Most of our comments are directed toward in-park transportation issues. > However, underlying that should be a discussion of regional > transportation. > > We would like to advocate that adequate regional transportation from each > of the gateway areas be available, including Fresno. That having been > said, we have to point out that the analysis needed to determine the > impacts of regional transportation on river ORV's has not been done. By > that we mean impacts on visitor experience as well as on natural values. > Still with us is the legacy of the 1980 GMP calling for the complete > elimination of all private automobiles. That misguided objective of the > GMP has been the source of much rancor and ill-advised management actions, > leading to much of the current congestion problem. (Example: Large-scale > elimination of parking without first implementing an adequate shuttle > system.) > > By their nature, public transportation systems are dependent on large > volumes of passengers in order to be economically justifiable. If it is > intended that regional transportation have high ridership, and we believe > that it must, then where is the NPS analysis of the impact of large > numbers of visitors? For that matter, where is the NPS analysis of the > impact of the increased number of visitors which a really good in-Valley > shuttle system would attract? > > We are NOT saying we are opposed to regional transportation or an improved > in-Valley shuttle system. We ARE saying that the required analysis to > support such transportation systems seems to be lacking. > > The Workbook suggests that, so far, the attempts to deal with user > capacity have been based on parking. This is fine as far as it goes, but > it would be terribly inadequate if the remaining NEPA processes do not > expand way beyond that in determining user capacities. > > That having been said, we offer a few more specific comments: > > (1) We are opposed to large parking lots, especially in the relatively > natural west Valley. > > (2) We advocate overflow parking lots, provided they are small and > dispersed so as not to be noticeable. An Intelligent Transportation > System could enable arriving visitors to find the parking areas with > available space. > > (3) But no one is going to want to park their car if there is not an > adequate in-Valley shuttle system. The first two Alternatives suggest > "limited options" on buses. It is not until the third Alternative > that it says there will be any buses. We strongly feel that having an > adequate in-Valley shuttle system should be an integral part of every > Alternative. By "adequate" we mean a system which goes as far as the > Pohono Bridge, with stops at numerous points, and with headways which > would encourage ridership. The system should be designed to encourage > visitors to experience the Valley in its totality. The existing in-Valley > shuttle system is grossly inadequate . (We have a problem with the buses > themselves, but that is probably beyond the scope of this project.) > > (4) If there is no other way of funding in-park transportation > improvements, as a last resort we might accept a "transportation fee" at > the park entrances. (We recognize that every park is different, making > comparisons risky. But we can't help but wonder where Zion found the > money to set up and operate their bus system.) > > (5) Fort Yosemite would be an ideal place for the bus maintenance > facility, if there are going to be any in-Valley shuttle buses. > > (6) We are opposed to pedestrian underpasses. Structures which utilize > grade separations to manage traffic flow belong in an urban setting, not a > national park. We would prefer to see the pedestrian crossings relocated > to places where the conflict with vehicular traffic is reduced. The > situation at the Lodge/Lower Falls is a prime example of a place which > could benefit from reconfiguration, possibly making an underpass not > necessary. Pedestrian underpasses are simply too permanent in character, > as well as being vastly more intrusive. If developments are kept on the > surface, they can be more easily moved or removed as changing > circumstances may warrant. > > (7) The road roundabouts are not as intrusive because they are at grade > level. > > ---------- > > OTHER SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: > > (1) The DNC employee housing complex immediately to the west of Curry > Village never should have been built. The rockfall risk in that location > is obviously greater than in most places. However, since the facilities > are already there, and are fairly new, they should be utilized for visitor > accommodations instead of employee housing. From a risk management > perspective, it makes sense to limit the amount of time people spend > there. Visitors are here today, gone tomorrow, whereas it is totally >

unacceptable for an employee to be exposed to the risk 365 days out of the > year. NPS could require that visitors be put on notice that nature is > unpredictable. Some of the less risky visitor accommodations could be > converted to employee housing. (That might also address the concern that > DNC has very little family-friendly employee housing.) > > (2) Boardwalks in the meadows are intrusive; but their saving grace is > that they are temporary in nature---easily removed or relocated. > > (3) It is time for the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp to be removed. > During the run-up to the 1984 Wilderness designation we tried to get the > HSC's incorporated into the Wilderness as "pre-existing, non-conforming" > uses. That would have made it possible to relocate ones which were in bad > places. But the powers-that-be chose to create a Swiss cheese Wilderness. > Which meant that the HSC's were locked into non-Wilderness enclaves. > Since the location of the Merced Lake HSC is not acceptable, the only > choice is to remove the camp. Its removal would reduce demand for access > to the trails between Happy Isles and Merced Lake, which tend to receive a > very high level of use. >

Correspondence ID: 313 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: 19 April 2012 [redacted] Santa Monica, CA 90405 RE: Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan, High Sierra Camps and Loop Trail Dear Superintendent Neubacher, I have a deep regard for the dual missions of the National Park Service of preservation and enjoyable access. Yosemite's High Sierra Camps have provided access to many who could never access the wilderness experience without some assistance. Hiking the Loop trail was one of the most transformative experiences of my life. I do not support of the series of alternative concepts which propose the elimination of camping infrastructure at the Merced High Sierra Camp, which would foreclose the possibility of completing the Loop. I have submitted my comments on the web site but wanted to reach you personally with my feedback. I hope you might take a few moments to read the attached essay about how hiking the Loop has allowed me to preserve my soul while parenting a child with severe disabilities. Also attached is a low-res photo taken in 2006 shortly before a tremendous storm broke just outside Merced Camp. Many backpackers were flooded out, and hikers who made it in to camp thought that they might have died had the camp not been there to provide shelter. Merced Camp has provided an important way station for people accessing the wilderness for decades, with relatively low impact, especially compared to what is available in the Valley. For me, and the folks I've met on those hikes, the High Sierra Camps exemplify the best of what the National Parks have to offer. The camps support the dual missions of the National Parks: to preserve scenic beauty, and to provide access for the public's enjoyment. The interpretive education provided by the naturalist ranger on a guided hike is unparalleled, preserving an important cultural wilderness tradition that is not replaceable by plans which value a total self-sufficiency available only to a narrow range of the completely able-bodied public. Please honor the dual purposes of the NPS and please do not close off one of the few wilderness experiences available to people of average means and physical abilities. Please keep the healing wilderness experience provided by the High Sierra Camps and the Loop trail available to the public. Sincerely [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 314 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Mariposans for the Environment and Responsible Government Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: April 18, 2012

Superintendent Donald Neubacher Yosemite National Park PO Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389 Dear Superintendent Neubacher: MERG has actively participated in the various workshops leading up to the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook for the Merced River Plan, and the MERG Board has met and studied the various concepts presented. We are impressed by the work accomplished by the Park staff and generally approve of the process. We trust that Park staff will carry this work to its most perfect possible conclusion as this is an historic opportunity to rectify years of mistakes and mismanagement. As former Vice President Walter Mondale, a co-sponsor of the WSRA said about the St. Croix River, "If this river is ever destroyed, it'll die of nicks and cuts. A bridge here, a power line there. These threats are everywhere and have to be fought everywhere." We submit that the very same rationale applies to our Merced River. We do like very much the changes that are proposed and apply across all alternatives as we feel that these will be of significant benefit by repairing the adverse impacts and degradation of the Merced River and Yosemite Valley due to past practices. We do, however, find it very difficult to evaluate the alternatives because we are confused by the variety and significant differences among the various proposals offered. The key to going forward however is user capacity. It is a term used very often in both the 9th Circuit decision and the Settlement Agreement. We have raised this with you at, I believe, every meeting. Getting a handle on user capacity is critical to the MRP process as the number of visitors in the Valley affects both environmental concerns over visitor impacts on the river, as well as visitor experience ? both key components of the WSRA. Fortunately both of these key requirements benefit from the same management practice ? limiting the number of visitors to the Park to that which it can reasonably be expected to handle without degradation of either the environment or the back to nature visitor experience that is the essence of the National Park system. While it has been much discussed, we are not sure how user capacity analysis has been applied in developing the several proposed alternatives. For example, we have participated in workshops at which Park researchers and consultants described measures of visitor experience such as "people at one time" (PAOT) and "people per view" (PPV) at the Park's major attraction sites. The results of evaluations of such data demonstrated the need for management practices to limit visitation at those sites to levels where visitor experience is not significantly degraded. It is not obvious how such quantitative approaches to user capacity have been utilized to develop the alternatives. It would seem to us that these are key factors and would provide for a reasonably good scientific approach to quantifying the number of visitors that can be accommodated in the Valley. Given the wide range of peak visitor use levels identified in the five alternatives, we do not understand how the higher levels can be consistent with the concept of the management practices described in visitor experience studies, and it would certainly seem that some of the proposed alternatives would significantly degrade visitor experience. Such degradation would not be consistent with the requirements of the WSRA. Similar concerns exist when it comes to restoring the ecological damage that has resulted from past practices given that there is such a range of restoration proposed in the various alternatives. Baseline ORV hydrologic data demonstrate that certain bridges, most notably the Sugar Pine Bridge, have negatively impacted and degraded River Values. Various court rulings and agreements have also made clear that the current conditions are in violation of the WSRA. The free flowing condition of the River is a River Value - an essential requirement of the WSRA, at an even higher level than an ORV. We applaud the

alternatives that propose removal of the offending bridges and, given the hydrologic data, do not understand why removal of the bridge(s) is not included in all alternatives. Similarly, baseline data on free-flowing conditions, hydrologic processes and biological conditions have demonstrated that the River and its immediate environs have been degraded. Therefore, if it is appropriate to restore a certain amount of acreage under one alternative, why is not the same restoration of acreage desirable for all? We do not believe that the elements contained in certain of the alternatives satisfy the WSRA, the various court orders or the Settlement Agreement, nor can we discern the rationale for elements contained in the various proposed alternatives. We therefore would like to see how each of the proposed alternatives has been evaluated in quantitative terms, i.e. impacts on the River Values and ORVs, including visitor experience. Given all the work that has gone into establishing baselines and the quantitative approach to the MRP, construction of such a matrix should not only be possible, but hopefully was prepared to serve as a basis for development of the current set of alternatives. More specifically, if we had to make a selection of which alternative we prefer we would opt for Alternative 1 as that provides for the greatest correction of past mistakes and provides for the most restoration of any of the alternatives. It also keeps the Valley camping inventory relatively stable by proposing the site of the present Yosemite Lodge for camping purposes. We think that camping is an important activity in the Valley and encourage it. We do not think RV use for camping is suitable in Yosemite Valley. We also like the proposed changes to traffic flow in the Valley in alternative 2. It was noted that Park staff stated at the user capacity workshop that no segment of the river is currently degraded, but instead reported that some portions of each segment have been degraded. The Housekeeping Camp was noted as an example of degradation and yet the approaches to that area in the various alternatives vary greatly. There are currently 5500 parking spaces on the Valley floor and, under Alternatives 4 and 5, the NPS anticipates adding up to 1000 spaces in West Valley, El Portal, and Yosemite Lodge. One proposal doubles the units at Yosemite Lodge. These were described as "add on" units. We simply do not understand how increasing units at Yosemite Lodge can be seriously proposed. It appears to us to be a violation of the WSRA, the intent of the Court and the Settlement Agreement. Further, MERG does not agree with constructing overflow parking in the West Valley in the "Taft Toe"/"El Cap crossover" area or in any other area in the Valley. We have opposed this for years and are not inclined to relent now. For the above reasons, Alternatives 4 and 5 are unacceptable to us and we are prepared to address this further if necessary. Several more relevant issues were discussed at our recent MERG Board meeting: 1. The cost of and ability of the Park Service to enforce parking restrictions on roads in order to force visitors into parking spaces. 2. Footnote 5 in the 9th Circuit Court Order states that there was degradation at that time and cites the numerous commercial ventures within the river corridor that are not directly related to any recreation ORV. 3. If Footnote 5 judged degradation had already occurred at some earlier point in the ten years of litigation, how can a 20% increase in visitation as envisioned by Alternative 5, over peak 2011 levels of 20,000 per day, be consistent with the court order and Settlement Agreement? 4. It was suggested that if the natural areas are restored, the Park benefits. We are concerned that if publicity urging visitation continues to be released daily by agencies external to the Park, proposed controls will be ineffective. The WSRA requires that the NPS protect and enhance the Merced River and its ORVs including user experience. Limiting the number of visitors to the Park's natural capacity will accomplish this. We would be naive however to ignore the fact that Yosemite National Park is an economic engine that provides jobs and income to the gateway communities; indeed we live in one of those communities, Mariposa, whose economy strongly depends to a significant degree on the Park. We are therefore strongly committed to maximizing the number of visitors to the Park without degrading River Values including visitor experience. We support using good traffic management, redesign of existing infrastructure outside of the river corridor to maximize efficiency, and other creative and imaginative thinking. We do not support more infrastructure and development to increase visitor numbers when the capacity of the Valley has already been exceeded, as evidenced by the high number of unacceptable traffic days last year. And while we recognize the importance of Yosemite National Park to the economy of the gateway communities, the operation of the Park itself and the facilities therein should not be regarded as a profit-center as that obviously creates a bias toward increasing facilities and services within the Park and River corridor. We would therefore suggest that a non-profit concessionaire be considered as part of the MRP. There is indeed a maximum user capacity in the Park that is consistent with the requirements of the WSRA and we would very much like to know what it is. Again, in order for MERG to properly evaluate the proposed alternatives, we need to understand the connections between the baseline data and the elements contained in the alternatives. You suggested to me at the March 28 session in the Park that a meeting with us sometime in April would be useful. I think so. Very truly yours, [redacted] Chairman

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Correspondence: [redacted], El Portal, CA 95318

April 18, 2012

Superintendent?Yosemite National Park? Attn: Merced River Plan? P.O. Box 577?Yosemite, CA 95389

Comments on Merced River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook

El Portal Section: Concepts 1, 3, 4, and 5

Housing and Parking Abbieville/Trailer Park: Under existing conditions on page 14 in the workbook, the Abbieville/Trailer Park is categorized as underutilized. The term "underutilized" is a holdover from earlier plans along the river corridor that had the goal of moving infrastructure from Yosemite Valley to El Portal. These early plans, specifically the 1980 general management plan, are overridden by the requirements of a Merced River Plan, which was required after designation of the Merced as a Wild and Scenic River in 1987. This area is a lightly developed wetlands and river boulder field, which has been modified by the deposition of fill material by the National Park Service. It is a section of the El Portal Administration Site, land purchased in 1958, as a place to move housing, offices, and other infrastructure to support park service operations. It appears that the NPS is holding onto old ideas for land use in the administration site, despite the fact that areas within one-quarter mile of a wild and scenic river should not be further degraded or sacrificed. Instead the agency managing the river must not only

make efforts to halt use that has destructive impacts, but should restore areas degraded by past uses. In other words one section of a river cannot be sacrificed areas in efforts to restore another section. What is driving policy is an assumed user capacity based on historic levels, not one based on developing a user capacity that eliminates further degradation on all sections of the river. High numbers of visitors to Yosemite require high levels support services. A large number of government and concession employees necessitates a continued high level of development in the "entire river corridor". Reducing housing in Yosemite Valley, which in a section of the Merced River designated as Recreational, by increasing housing in El Portal in a river section, also designated as Recreational reflects a less concern for the El Portal section, because park planners say the latter area gets the less visitation. The USFS would not be allowed at this point to build an extensive set of offices and housing on Forest Service managed land downriver where there have been historic housing and mines even though this area is less visited than El Portal. That is why user capacity is such an important element of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Impacts and degradation no matter where or how created should not be allowed for the purpose of accommodating over use of the river corridor. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act requires that the condition of a designated river at the time of designation, in this case, 1987, be the benchmark for preservation. Imagine that the agency responsible for developing the plan delayed initiating the planning process, and during that time further degraded sections of the river. This is what happened to the Merced River. Between 1987 and 2000 when the NPS began developing the Wild and Scenic Plan for the Merced River, they constructed several sets of high-density apartment housing, 7 single-family homes, and a massive office/maintenance complex near the riverbank at Railroad Flat. All of this construction was built within the quarter mile Wild and Scenic River boundary. After the 1997 flood in an effort to defend this infrastructure the National Park Service extended Foresta road out into the riverbed, added riprap to the river bank at Railroad Flat and near Rancheria Flat, and re-contoured sections of the riverbed. If this development is not going to be removed, at least no more degradation should be allowed on this section of the river or any other for that matter. Restoring the sewage plant at Rancheria Flat, the entire Valley Oak Grove ORV (from Middle Road to the Old El Portal Hotel on both sides of the Foresta Road), and the trailer Park as well as removing the levee that alters the river flow above it, might satisfy as a mitigation for the above violation of the intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, should be mitigated by.

To move housing for low wage concession employees to El Portal or anywhere else out of Yosemite Valley makes no sense. These are these employees are the ones needed to run the hotels, food services, and stores. Rockslides have closed the road between El Portal and Yosemite Valley over the last several decades. After the 1997 flood it was closed to regular traffic for months. Rockslides and floods have forced employee housing and parking to be moved from historic sites and essentially diminished the footprint for development of infrastructure. To maintain development, even campgrounds, parking lots, and storage sheds or other structures, in rock fall zones and flood plains is irresponsible. To move Yosemite Valley housing downriver because there is no longer room does not address the issue of the total consequences of excessive use of the Merced River corridor in Yosemite Valley. Any user capacity numbers that prevent restoration or allow for further development on lower sections of the river are by definition to high. In effect the demand to keep the status quo is negating the intent of WSR designation.

Adding parking spaces in the Abbieville/trailer park site is not only is too little too late, but it is an added degradation within < mile of river corridor. Visitors should be warned of crowded conditions in Yosemite Valley by the time they enter Mariposa. Mariposa is a much better place for them to wait if they wish secure a parking space in the Valley later in the day. It has the infrastructure of restaurants and other services, tourist attractions, more space for parking if the National Park Service partnered with Mariposa County government to build parking and bus transfer stations for visitors who wished to take a bus to Yosemite Valley.

Housing and Offices in Old El Portal: Government built housing is expensive to build and requires continual maintenance. At a time when funding for federal agencies is being cut, this means that such construction might possibly eliminate funds for more important programs in the park. The private housing in El Portal a good model because it provides employees the opportunity buy a home,which they, not the NPS will maintain, without cost to the government.

The roads in Old El Portal are barely adequate for the present density of residents and workers at the Yosemite Conservancy, Naturebridge, and NPS offices. Over the last 20 years Naturebridge's (formerly Yosemite Institute) conversion by of seven single-family homes in Old El Portal into dorm style housing greatly increased the number of vehicles driving on the narrow roads. The addition of speed humps has helped to slow traffic in areas where there are a large number of pedestrians and children. If any more residences are constructed here, these conditions need to be considered when planning types of housing, parking, and numbers of vehicles.

At various times rerouting the road away from the community hall has been discussed. This change would ensure more safety entry and exiting from the hall and could be done by rearranging the parking configuration across from the hall. The NPS resources office was moved to the old fire barracks without adding additional parking. Now NPS vehicles take up a large portion of parking spaces for the community hall. This issue needs to be resolved before more space is claimed by infill housing in the hall area. The restoration of the understory of the Valley Oak Grove across from the train turnaround and by the old fiscal office trailer, will remove parking currently used by NPS employees, Yosemite Conservancy Staff, and overflow parking for community events, as well as YARTS riders. It seems logical that a comprehensive parking plan that considers the current state of inadequate parking and the consequences of necessary parking space removal to restore and protect the Valley Oaks (and MRP ORV). Without this adding more development is only going to exacerbate parking problems.

In the May of 2012 a number of National Park Service employees whose jobs are primarily administrative will work in a National Park Service Office in Mariposa. Without a doubt if the National Park Service gets the go ahead from congress to purchase land in Mariposa, more employees will have offices there. Alternatives 2-5 all show administrative offices for the park concession located in old EP Planners at MRP meeting April 12th in El Portal mentioned that this was part of 1980 GMP. The GMP was made obsolete by the stricter requirements of MRP, since protection of the river comes first. It seems if the National Park Service can do move offices to mariposa then park concession employees with desk jobs can also work in offices there as well. Other land management agencies, such as El Yunque National Forest in Puerto Rico have managed to protect fragile

ecosystems by having headquarters many miles away from the forest near a town where housing and other services are available. Houses and land to build housing are currently available in Mariposa County at prices that enable employees to purchase homes with monthly mortgage payments a rates equal to the cost of rent in National Park Service houses in the park and El Portal. Only essential park service and concession employees need to reside in the existing housing within the Merced River Corridor in Yosemite Valley and El Portal.

Overall I believe that concept one in most cases except building more housing in the river corridor in on the El Portal Section of the river, best addresses the requirements of the Wild and Scenic River Planning process. Day use levels need to differentiate the number of cars vs. people arriving by bus. A peak use of 14,200 (combined day and overnight use in Yosemite Valley) is listed in the workbook without any explanation how this level will affect conditions in the Merced River.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

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Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Email submitted from: [redacted] at /yose/parkmgmt/mrp_comment.htm

Mailing Address: [redacted] Torrance, California 90505 United States

Dear Kathleen, I am writing to provide my input on the Preliminary Concepts of the Merced River Plan. Having enjoyed staying in the Housekeeping area for nearly 2 decades, my family and I are supportive of Preliminary Concept #3, the relocation of 30 Housekeeping units. We understand the need for some modifications to the area and hope that the vote will be to keep the remaining Housekeeping Units for all of us who so enjoy this area and setting. Kind regards, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 317 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,30,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Email submitted from: [redacted] at /yose/parkmgmt/mrp_comment.htm

As a HSC Cook, we also try our best to help limit the water usage and the water waste that will impact the surrounding area of our camps. I am under the impression that all the camps do what they can and even go out of there way to insure our impact is minimal. These places should not be treated like Hetch Hetchy, any one should be able to go and see what there is to see and have their time in a beautiful spot and make their own story's to tell the young.

Correspondence ID: 318 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition Recreational Groups
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: COMMENT FORM Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook Insert Yosemite National Park March 2012 Submitted by [redacted], Co-Founder Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition April 20, 2012

1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? NO. NPS has failed to provide a concept that repairs the flood damaged campgrounds in Lower Pines, Upper River, Lower River, and Group Campground north of Tenaya Creek as related to the thousands of petition signers submitted in previous workshops and scoping session. Further to that failure, the NPS does not address many of the concerns submitted in scoping sessions that supplement the petition. The facts are that the condition of the existing ORV's is not impacted or detrimental to the Merced River as they exist. Reference the NPS remarks from slides that were shown at the March 27 webinar @ the time mark of 13' 30," including the time in the presentation when they were shown at the March 28 workshop: "No ORVs are experiencing segment-wide impacts." If this is true, why are you eliminating campsites in your alternatives (all that apply) and why can't the NPS offer the alternative requested above by thousands of campers in the petition offered by the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition? Why can't camping go beyond these concept sites and offer more affordable family friendly auto-based drive-in campsites to the likes of which have been submitted in writing? If this is true that no ORV's are experiencing segment-wide impacts, why are the bridges being removed? Isn't it true that WSRA states that if an existing facility is in place, WSRA does not command that it be removed and, in fact, if it needs a licensing permit, one can be obtained? It appears that the NPS has gone outside its boundaries and excluded the public access to affordable enjoyment of the Park's resources.

Where is the bike path circulation plan? You've been told, and you know, that campers and day visitors bring their bikes to ride the Valley. You've seen it. It is a clean way to travel for pleasure and to the market. Nothing in your plan has this included?

Where is a plan that addresses transportation? Are you still intending to bus in the "haves" that can pay the high revenue for the concessionaire? My guess is that you will behind closed doors after the plan is recorded in a decision.

No mention of removing rafting concessions and opening up rafting on personal floatation devices. Do you really intend to remove the golf course at Wawona, the swimming pool and tennis courts at the Ahwahnee? None bother the River or most people.

2. Do the Alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Explain. You are asking a question that cannot be answered by the public both nominally and technically. The NPS goals seem to be quite different than that of the public and specifically the camping public. Radical imposition of NPS dreams that are unfounded to be necessary except for public perception. The details for the plans are far more radically wrong than the summaries suggest, creating public deception. Campers do not denigrate the River nor the Park resources; fixed roof lodging and the concessions do! Remember the trips per day it takes to support a fixed roof lodger? 10 to 1 for a camper! Encouraging camping is the only acceptable park activity that enhances the quality of the visitor experience and the ORV's.

3. Feedback on Alternative Concept 1: #4. Make day-use parking and picnic; #5. Do not relocate all but rather 100 each; #6. NO to all in its entirety; #7. Repair campgrounds to pre-flood conditions; #8. Agree as stated; #9. Do not remove any spaces; #10. NO removals and no realignment; #11. NO in its entirety; #12. No in its entirety; #13 NO in its entirety; #14. Remove stables, yes; add campsites; repair and upgrade Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

4. Feedback on Alternative Concept 2: #3. Are you going to provide bussing for concessionaire? #4. Do not do this! #5. OK as written #6. Relocate only 100 spaces #7. NO #9. NO #10. NO #11. NO #12. NO removal for road re-alignment and NO re-alignment #13. NO #14. OK but put where stables currently exist. #15. NO #16 Do not remove Merced Lake facilities but rather repair and improve them

5. Feedback on Alternative Concept 3: #1. No idea what this means. Please explain. #3. Why? Will you provide bussing? Seems to make no sense. #4. NO. Provide day-use parking and picnic. #5. OK but needs more parking. #6. Do not do this. #7. NO #8. Repair these campgrounds to pre-flood conditions along with Lower Pines and Group Camp #9. NO #10. NO #11. No removal for road re-alignment #12. No to walk-in and RV campsites; make 75 drive-in tent camping sites only for all mentioned. #13. Yes to stables removal but for more camping; Repair Merced Lake facilities and improve.

6. Feedback on Alternative Concept 4: #4. OK but provide picnic area. #5. Provide day-use parking and picnic area. #6. OK #7. NO #8. NO #9. NO walk-in; rather 75 drive-in auto based for tent campers #10. OK and also west of Clark's Bridge. #12. NO #13. No to walk-in and RV campsites; make 75 drive-in tent camping sites only for all mentioned.

7. Feedback on Alternative Concept 5 #3. This should be an increase to the present count and it should be "well graded" and spread throughout the Valley and not concentrated to one area. Shuttle service should extend to west Valley as well as to Sentinel Dome trailhead and Glacier Point. #4. OK on the boardwalks and viewing platforms; NO to restoring all informal trails as that will take care of itself with the boardwalks. No tree removal. #5. YES but all for small trailers and tent campers. NO RV. #6. West of Yosemite Lodge should be day use parking and picnicking. Other areas better suited for new campsites. How about east of the Ahwahnee parking lot near the current equestrian area. Other possible sites sent to you via a marked up map from the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition. #7. OK and also where stable currently exist. #8. OK #9. NO #10. THIS IS NOT A "NEW" CAMPGROUND!! BOTH 'RIVER' CAMPGROUNDS, LOWER PINES, AND GROUP CAMPGROUND ARE CURRENTLY CAMPGROUNDS IN NEED OF REPAIR. ALL PREVIOUS PLANS HAVE BEEN RECINDED QUALIFYING THESE SITES AS CURRENT CAMPGROUNDS AND AWAITING REPAIR?.we cannot believe you are pulling this one! #11. Only if a must due to rockfall #12. NO NO NO! The facts are that the condition of the existing ORV's is not impacted or detrimental to the Merced River as they exist. Reference the NPS remarks from slides that were shown at the March 27 webinar @ 13:30hrs, including the time in the presentation when they were shown at the March 28 workshop: "No ORVs are experiencing segment-wide impacts." If this is true, why are you eliminating campsites in your alternatives (all that apply)? We cannot believe you are pulling this one-hence the "Save North Pines" movement! NPS, what don't you get about this subject? Riverside camping IS an ORV and we have stated such in many submission statements and orally at workshops. Do Not Remove them, add more, please. #13. No to walk-in and RV campsites; make 75 drive-in tent camping sites these locations. Maximize new campsites and make new campground east of the Ahwahnee parking lot. Do not remove any bridges as they are historical and since there is "No ORV's experiencing segment-wide impacts," this should not be a problem. Maximize space where stables are to be removed and increase North Pines campsites for tent and RV camping.

8. Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered? A. Do all of the alternatives protect and enhance river values as stated in the March 27 webinar @ time mark 16' 22," including the time when they were shown in the March 28th Workshop? B. Yes. Repair all flood damaged campsites to pre-flood conditions in Lower Pines, Upper River, Lower River, and Group Campground north of Tenaya Creek. C. Add new campground east of Ahwahnee Hotel parking lot. D Do not re-align roads. E. Keep Northside Road in tact. F. What is with this re-alignment of the road and removal of bridges? Are you all still stuck on the 1980 GMP? I thought we were beyond that? The more I read this workbook and see what is in it and what is not in it, relative to transportation, the more I think you will someday reveal a bussing plan that will affect all park visitors after this plan is recorded. The NPS does these sneaky maneuvers year after year. Why is a transportation Plan not in plain view as a foundational planning element? G. Where is the bike trail/path along both Northside and Southside Roads to Bridalveil Falls as well as shuttle service to same? H. Remove concession rafting altogether for all concepts and allow private floatation devices from Clark's Bridge to Sentinel Beach WITHOUT PERMITS. Certainly this event will be less of an impact to the present concession of very large rafts. I. The Sugar Pine Bridge, the Ahwahnee Bridge, and Stoneman bridges all have several important aspects, not the least of these being important to a transportation and traffic circulation plan. They are 'historical' structures. They provide emergency access for evacuation and safety. They provide viewing corridors for bicyclists and the disabled in a practical sense and as an ORV. They will provide access to the Upper and Lower River Campgrounds, Group Campground, and the new Ahwahnee Campground (east of the parking lot, at such time as the NPS finally come to their senses and repair the

flood damaged campgrounds.

I HAVE BEEN ACTIVE FOR 32 YEARS ON TRYING TO PRESERVE AFFORDABLE FAMILY AUTO BASED DRIVE-IN CAMPING AND FIND THAT THIS TEAM STILL IS INDIGNANT TO THE TENANTS OF THE FOUNDING FATHER'S IDEAS OF RESOURCE BASED PARK ENJOYMENT AND TO THE MANY WHO HAVE SPENT THEIR TIME AND DIMES TO BE INVOLVED WITH PLANNING EFFORTS AND OFFER THEIR OPINIONS AND TESTIMONIES. DIFFERENT FACES AND NAMES FOR THIS NPS TEAM BUT THE WASTED PLANS CONTINUE. YOU'VE WONDERED AND ASKED WHERE THE RESPONDENTS ARE? YOU'VE CHASED THEM AWAY WITH PLANS THAT SPEAK TO THIS: "IT ISN'T WORTH MY TIME" AND "THE NPS IS GOING TO DO WHAT EVER THEY WANT REGARDLESS OF WHAT MY INPUT IS." AND SO, THIS WORKBOOK IS JUST ANOTHER WASTE OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS. TO BE ASKED TO READ AND COMMENT UPON THIS WORKBOOK IS AN INSULT TO THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED SO HARD AND SO LONG TO PARTNER WITH THE NPS; HOWEVER, I HAVE DONESO, NONETHELESS, WITH GREAT DISGUST. ALL CONCEPT PLANS ARE HEREBY REJECTED, EMPHATICALLY.

DON'T YOU PEOPLE READ WHAT HAS BEEN SENT TO YOU?

With guarded respect, [redacted] Co-Founder Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition (YVCC)

Cc: Kathleen Morse, Chief Planner, Merced River Plan, Yosemite National Park [redacted], Co-Founder, YVCC [redacted], Deputy for Senator Dianne Feinstein [redacted], Chief of Staff and State Director for Senator Dianne Feinstein [redacted], Deputy for Senator Barbara Boxer [redacted], District Director for U.S. Representative Jeff Dunham [redacted], Los Angeles Times

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Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Email submitted from: [redacted] at /yose/contacts.htm

Mailing Address: [redacted] Willow Creek, CA 95573 USA

Please do not change the current recreational use of the Park by stock users. We own three mules specifically for our camping/packing trips that we enjoy throughout the summer months. My husband and I, along with our grandchildren will not be able to enjoy our parks to the extent that we now do without our horse and mules. Please do not take this privilege away!

Correspondence ID: 320 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Email submitted from [redacted] at /yose/contacts.htm

Mailing Address: [redacted] Anderson, CA 96007 [redacted]

I vehemently protest the restriction of using horses and/or mules in the Yosemite National Park. These lands belong to the people for their enjoyment. It is so exhilarating to ride your horse on the high trails. It indeed would be a detriment to the people of California and the equine industry for a ban such as this to occur. I ask that you vote against any such ban. Thank you.

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Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Email submitted from: [redacted] at /yose/contacts.htm

Mailing Address: [redacted] Woodbridge, CA 95258 USA

Dear Superintendent, I want to express my concern about any changes to the current recreational use of the Park by stock users and commercial stock organizations that operate stock operations within the Park. I believe that stock use is one of the most enjoyable activities that visitors to the Park can achieve, as the experience of riding a horse or a mule in the great west of the United States by visitors from all around the world. Those who imagined and relished the establishment of a Park were transported through this beautiful area by horse or mule. The Park was built with the help of these animals. Stock use in the Park is a very historic activity that should never be denied or restricted. As an avid backpacker, rock climber and mountain biker, who has pulled many wilderness permits from your office I feel the back country should also be enjoyed by those on horseback. I've never had any issues with stock traffic and have always enjoyed watching the teams pass. In my opinion, the proposed changes to the current recreational use of stock in the park are more red tape and bureaucracy. I ask that no action be taken to change the current activities of stock use in the Park as it would have a highly negative effect on the public's ability to enjoy the Park to its fullest. Respectfully, [redacted], Small Business Owner [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 322 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Email submitted from [redacted] at /yose/contacts.htm

Mailing Address: [redacted]

Portola Valley, CA

Dear Parks Superintendent: I understand there is some discussion of removing stock from Yosemite National Park. That would be a travesty. I have horsecamped there many a time, and it is a life-sustaining experience. In addition, every hiker we've come across has been thrilled to see horses. Horses have roamed California for centuries...I cannot think why anyone could think they are environmentally inappropriate. PLease, please, do not take away this extraordinary experience for those of us who choose to explore with horses and mules. Respectfully, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 323 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC) Conservation/Preservation
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: After so many years of our Center being involved in the Merced River plan and Park Service planning tied to Yosemite Valley, the current plan process provides a mixture of hope and of concern.

The hope stems from the fact that the planning staff has been exceptional in terms of striving to be transparent, in working to communicate with the public, and of being open to the input that strongly opinionated people share so passionately. The concern rises from the fact that at numerous meetings, Park officials and even the planners have stated that traffic congestion caused by a few hundred too many cars is the main problem. Opinions from planning staff have included the perspective that even when Yosemite Valley is clogged with crowds of visitors, surveys found that everyone is generally happy with their experience. The message shared is that traffic congestion is pretty much the sole problem.

Despite our Center's strong praise for the quality of leadership and planning in Yosemite at this time, CSERC strongly disagrees that vehicle congestion is the only major problem tied to user capacity in Yosemite Valley, and we also disagree that most people are generally happy amidst crowded circumstances. Of course people are thrilled to be in world-renowned Yosemite Park when they visit, even if they find it more crowded than they'd prefer. But if the question was asked in a different way than done in the studies, many visitors during peak summer periods would certainly agree that their experience would be better and the Park would be healthier if crowding was diminished.

These CSERC comments, however, focus on more than visitor satisfaction.

Our staff asserts that to meet legal requirements and to do what is truly visionary for Yosemite Valley and the river corridor as the Park looks to the future, the Park Service staff needs to not only significantly reduce traffic congestion, but to also ultimately select a management plan that truly ENHANCES resource values as well as the visitor experience within the river corridor.

TECHNICAL, LEGAL COMMENTS

When I attended the March 28th Merced Plan workshop meeting, I brought along a copy of the February 2001 Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan that our Center was originally engaged in with Park planners many years ago. I intended to discuss key parts of that early document with planning staff because it appears that the current strategic approach for the Merced River Wild and Scenic River Management Plan is moving in directions that are at odds with legal decision statements provided by the Park Service in that previous plan process.

On page A-4 of the 2001 Revised Record of Decision of the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan, the following text is provided:

"Although the Merced River Plan would amend the General Management Plan in certain respects, other aspects of the General Management Plan, including its five broad goals, remain unaffected. Implementation plans affecting the Merced Wild and Scenic River will need to be consistent with these goals and the management elements contained in the Merced River Plan." (underlining and bold added)

That Park plan explicitly spelled out that the Merced River Plan must be consistent with the five broad goals of the General Management Plan. Kathleen shared with me at the recent Yosemite Gateway Partners meeting that the Park "may" amend the General Management Plan with the new Merced Wild and Scenic Management Plan. Our staff understands that the new Plan may amend some aspects of the GMP, but it appears that the prior Merced River Plan document made it clear that the five broad

goals of the General Management Plan must still apply.

On page 23 of the 2001 Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan, the Plan explicitly stated that the 1980 General Management Plan established five broad goals that "are still valid today and apply to the management of the Merced River corridor under the Merced River Plan."

Yet now, four of those five General Management Plan goals provide legal direction that may be in conflict with some of the Park's 2012 Concepts on Preliminary Alternatives for the Merced River Plan. Those four GMP goals are described in the 2001 Plan:

Reclaim priceless natural beauty ? "The priceless natural beauty of the river corridor shall be protected and enhanced for today's visitors and future generations."

(Note: To "enhance" the natural beauty of the river corridor is not just to maintain it. To "enhance" is defined as to improve, augment, increase, boost, enrich, or otherwise add to the existing value. Thus the natural beauty of the river corridor must be managed so that it is both protected and boosted, enriched, or improved. CSERC questions whether either Concept Alternative 4 or 5 will fully meet this test when it comes to resources in the river corridor.)

Allow natural processes to prevail ? "Some processes, such as hydrology, have been altered by historic and current land-use patterns. The Merced River shall be protected and further restored to its free-flowing condition, allowing the natural processes that shaped the Valley to continue." (underlining added)

This GMP goal makes it clear that the River shall be further restored to its free-flowing condition. Removal of bridges, rip rap, and other past structures or management actions that have led to a constrained river are proposed in the five Concept Alternatives. But the clarity of the GMP goal is that the objective is a free-flowing condition that allows the natural processes that shaped the Valley to continue. If feasible actions that are not politically popular are avoided, CSERC questions whether the Park will be in compliance.

Markedly reduce traffic congestion ? "Traffic congestion that occurs in the Merced River corridor can affect some of its Outstandingly Remarkable Values, such as enjoyment of the natural river environment. ?.Where applicable, the Merced River Plan contributes to reducing traffic congestion by guiding subsequent plans that address road locations and facilities, parking areas, turnouts, and other related issues." (underlining added)

There is no question that planners are focusing in on reducing traffic congestion. CSERC hopes that the objective will not just be where to park more cars so as to reduce traffic jams, but even more, to reduce the number of cars driving into the East Valley.

CSERC recognizes that the politics of our current era do not provide Park Service officials the public support to actually remove all private vehicles from Yosemite Valley as was so strongly promoted and officially approved as the objective in the past. BUT TO NOT PLAN TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE PRIVATE VEHICLE USE IN THE EAST HALF OF YOSEMITE VALLEY WITH THIS MERCED RIVER PLAN WOULD BE A HUGE SET-BACK TO SETTING PRECEDENT THAT THE QUALITY OF THE NATIONAL PARK ENVIRONMENT IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PERSONAL CONVENIENCE FOR MASSES OF VISITORS. Reduce crowding ? "The popularity of national parks such as Yosemite continues to grow. During peak visitation periods, crowding can diminish visitors' experiences and may contribute to degradation of resources along the river." (underlining added)

This GMP goal is especially important because it clearly acknowledges that crowding can diminish visitors' experiences and contribute to "degradation" of resources. On page 5 of the Merced Alternative Concepts Workbook, item 3 under "Addressing User Capacity" states: "Activities will not be allowed to degrade river values or cause adverse impact."

Thus it is necessary in this soon-to-be-approved Merced River Plan that the Park Service select an action alternative that "reduces crowding" so that there is no degradation of resources along the river and there are not adverse impacts.

Key comment:

CSERC ASSERTS THAT PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS 4 and 5 CANNOT BE FOUND TO BE CONSISTENT WITH AT LEAST TWO OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN GOALS REFERENCED ABOVE.

In 2011 there were 67 days identified when traffic levels exceeded capacity in the east end of Yosemite Valley. The congestion in 2011 was evident in more than just a lack of parking spaces. The level of traffic last summer resulted in both vehicle and human congestion, some periods of elevated emissions, higher levels of noise within the river corridor, and sprawling visitation during peak use periods that resulted in high use of trails and activities in river corridor areas surrounding lodging and service facilities, and a resulting increased level of impact to river corridor resources.

Simply in terms of disturbance of wildlife, whether it is nesting birds or foraging animals, the higher the number of people in the river corridor, the higher the resulting incidence of disturbance. High levels of human activity inarguably add to some degree to

various impacts to biological resources along the river's riparian area and meadow systems.

This is an important point that appears to be lost in many Park staff statements to the public about congestion. CONGESTION IS MORE THAN TOO MANY VEHICLES RESULTING IN BACK-UP, INADEQUATE PARKING, AND STRESSFUL TRAFFIC. Congestion is also high levels of human activity on the trail to Vernal Falls, on the paths between Curry Village and Yosemite Village, at El Capitan Meadow, along the trails in the river corridor that lead to Bridleveil Falls, and all the other locations that become more and more crowded during extreme peak visitation periods.

Another important point tied to visitation is that even during peak use periods, there will always be a percentage of visitors who desperately seek to find the pockets of habitat or scenic view points in Yosemite Valley where they can either find solitude for a few minutes or at least find the least busy spot. When so many thousands of visitors crowd the Valley, that means that those who are looking for less crowded spots thrash deeper into the bushes or the talus/boulder fields. They push further back along the meadows and along the portions of the river corridor that may not get human use much at all during quieter times of the year. USER CAPACITY MUST CONSIDER THAT THE BUSIER AND MORE CROWDED THAT YOSEMITE VALLEY IS ALLOWED TO BE, THE MORE THAT INDIVIDUAL HIKERS OR BIKERS OR GROUPS OF QUIET-SEEKING VISITORS WILL PUSH FURTHER AND FURTHER INTO THE LIMITED BLOCKS OF HABITAT THAT DON'T NORMALLY GET DISTURBED. THAT LEAVES EVEN LESS REFUGE HABITAT FOR VARIOUS WILDLIFE SPECIES WITHIN THE RIVER CORRIDOR.

Alternative Concept 4 would allow an estimated 20,500 people or more during peak visitor use periods, and Alternative 5 would allow 24,000. Whether or not additional traffic management mitigation measures now envisioned by Park staff actually improve traffic circulation and whether or not additional parking spaces allow for more ease in locating available parking, those Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 would still allow extremely high levels of visitation. Accordingly, as spelled out above, high visitation inarguably results in higher numbers of people recreating directly along the river corridor or otherwise affecting river resources and values than what occurs when overall use is lower.

The higher the number of overall visitors (EVEN WITH NEW SOCIAL TRAILS MANAGEMENT AND OTHER NEW MANAGEMENT CONDITIONS), the more likely there will be increased impacts to biological resources, noise, air pollution, disturbance of wildlife, and other negative effects than when there is a lower number of visitors.

THIS MAY BE THE KEY POINT OF LEGAL CONFLICT IN THIS PRESENT PLANNING EFFORT BY PARK STAFF.

VISITOR EXPERIENCES ARE ALWAYS DEGRADED TO VARIOUS DEGREES (DEPENDING UPON THE AFFECTED INDIVIDUAL) BY HIGH LEVELS OF SOCIAL CROWDING. BUT MORE IMPORTANT, THE RIVER ECOSYSTEM WILL NOT LIKELY BE "ENHANCED" OR EVEN "PROTECTED" IF 20,000 OR MORE PEOPLE CROWD INTO THE RIVER CORRIDOR ON PEAK VISITATION DAYS. JAMMING SO MANY PEOPLE INTO A WORLD-RENOWNED NATURAL CATHEDRAL IS NOT THE QUALITY VISITOR EXPERIENCE THAT YOSEMITE VALLEY SHOULD PROVIDE, EVEN DURING BUSY PERIODS.

Even if the Park Service improves management for the Swinging Bridge picnic area or Liedig Meadow or trails in the river corridor east of Bridelveil Falls, the extremely high visitation levels of Alternative Concept 4 and 5 will be in direct conflict with WSRMP direction to "protect and enhance" river values.

In addition to the dictionary definitions for "enhance" that are provided previously, there is a legal requirement for the Park to follow court direction and to truly manage the river corridor in a manner that does more than maintain the status quo. This is especially evident when the mandate to "enhance" river values is compared with baseline conditions. Yet the choice of the baseline appears to conflict with the purpose of the WSRA.

THE CURRENT PLAN USES AN INCORRECT BASELINE FOR COMPARING EFFECTS

Current use levels and "existing conditions" that are now considered in 2012 to be the baseline levels are far higher than levels that were considered to be congested and of concern in 1999-2001 when our Center participated in the first attempt at a Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan. Yet now those new "current" levels are being used to compare and contrast alternative concepts.

High visitation levels that would have been far above the baseline at the beginning of the initial or even the second iteration of the Merced River Plan are now being shown in Concept Alternatives as "less than" or similar to the extremely high peak total visitor use number of 20,500 people that is now described as "existing conditions and current management."

KEY COMMENT:

The baseline level of use for the present Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan should be the level of visitation and use that was measured/estimated at the launching of the original Merced Wild and Scenic Comprehensive Management Plan process, not the extremely inflated level of use that occurred last year during the congested summer peak season.

It may be that for this Plan to progress, the Park cannot re-do the Concept Alternatives to reflect the real baseline conditions at

the beginning of the Wild and Scenic Management Plan process over 12 years ago. BUT IN THE DEIS, THE "EXISTING CONDITIONS" THAT WERE THE BASELINE AT THE TIME OF THE FIRST COURT DECISION OVERTURNING THE MERCED PLAN SHOULD BE CLEARLY SHOWN IN COMPARISON WITH VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES NOW BEING CONSIDERED.

This is an important legal point that the Park Service must openly address. CSERC asserts that the Park cannot legally keep increasing the "existing condition" visitor use level baseline over the years due to the fact that the Park has failed to complete a legally adequate Wild and Scenic River management plan. Even more of a concern, the Park should have completed a Wild and Scenic River management plan within three years of the Merced River being designated by Congress. The failure to do so has now led to so many years of increasing annual average use and far higher levels of private vehicle use in the East Yosemite Valley area. Thus the failure of the Park to complete a management plan with an appropriate threshold of user capacity for various at-risk resources has resulted in a continuous sliding of the baseline.

What was the average annual "existing condition" and baseline of visitor use and private vehicle numbers then in Yosemite Valley and the river corridor? Why shouldn't that level of use and visitation be the baseline for which Concept Alternatives and actual Alternatives are measured against for purposes of comparison? AT THE VERY LEAST, CSERC ASSERTS THAT THE VISITOR USE LEVEL AND EXISTING CONDITION DURING THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT A MANAGEMENT PLAN 12 YEARS AGO SHOULD BE THE "BASELINE AND EXISTING CONDITION" THAT PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES AND USE.

ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS 4 AND 5 CONFLICT WITH GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN GOALS TO REDUCE CROWDING AND MARKEDLY REDUCE TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The Wild and Scenic River Act directs an agency to protect and enhance river values. CSERC believes that Alternative Concepts 4 and 5 are both too high to meet the WSRA mandate to protect and "enhance" river values.

Even if the baseline "existing condition" was based upon use last year, rather than when the Park launched the Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, both Alternative Concept 4 and Alternative Concept 5 provide for more overnight visitor use throughout the River Corridor than current 2012 use levels as described in the Alternative Concepts Workbook. Both Alternative Concept 4 and Alternative Concept 5 would provide for more Peak Overnight Visitor Use than current levels.

At Yosemite Gateway Partners meetings, Park officials have openly acknowledged that the congestion during last summer was undesirable to the Park Service, and Don and other staff invited Gateway Partners and the public to offer solutions about how to reduce that congestion. But with Alternative Concept 4 and Alternative Concept 5, the Day-Use Capacity Management Strategy would either be the same as last year's high maximum levels or capacity would actually increase to 24,000 people. More parking spaces or a slight shift to more busing may decrease the traffic congestion to some degree, but without some honest user capacity limits or threshold actions, periodic unacceptable use will occur.

By not decreasing Peak Overnight Visitor Use and not decreasing Day Use Capacity, Concept Alternatives 4 and 5 appear to directly conflict with the General Management Plan goal to reduce crowding. CSERC believes that the court, if brought into the debagte once again, will scold the Park Service for failing to get the message AGAIN if an alternative similar to Concept Alternatives 4 or 5 is chosen. Even if the Park provides more parking spaces, 20,000 or more people in Yosemite Valley and within the River corridor will inarguably result in crowding and excessive visitor use for resources and river values. Crowding would NOT be reduced for overnight accommodations and peak day use during times when crowding is most significant.

KEY COMMENT:

CSERC asserts that the current Workbook and public meetings have skewed the range of alternatives presented to the public by including two Alternative Concepts (4 and 5) that do not comply with the GMP goal to reduce crowding and to markedly reduce traffic congestion. Whether or not there are more parking spaces created, managing for a very high level of user capacity will result in there being more vehicles in the river corridor, and that will still potentially result in traffic congestion during peak use periods.

The GMP goal is to markedly reduce traffic congestion. The definition of "markedly" is shown as "noticeably, strikingly, significantly, and prominently." CSERC challenges the Park planning staff to consider whether either Alternative Concept 4 or 5 would significantly or prominently reduce traffic congestion. Our staff strongly asserts that traffic congestion would NOT be "markedly" or significantly reduced if either of those Alternative Concepts were selected.

UNPOPULAR ACTIONS IN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT 1 FURTHER SKEW PUBLIC INPUT

After criticism at the March 28th public workshop, Park Service staff did mention to the public that Park planners do desire to get public comments about which specific items are supported within each Alternative Concept and which are not supported by commenting members of the public. However, even hearing that once from planners, many members of the commenting public will follow the choices laid out for them and simply select an Alternative Concept and communicate their choice to planners.

Most of the interested public, or at least a majority of commenting members of the public, will NOT support completely removing lodging units at Yosemite Lodge or completely removing Housekeeping Camp or removing great numbers of existing

parking spaces. Having those components be a key part of Alternative Concept 1 thus will cause most members of the public to choose to give their support to another alternative, even if they feel personal support for very low day use capacity levels.

Likewise, many members of the public will not support all of the other possibly controversial proposed restoration actions, such as removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, removal of the Wawona golf course, removal of all campsites within the 100-year floodplain, and the complete removal of Housekeeping Camp. Accordingly, the way that the "lowest visitor use" alternative is presented, it inarguably will lead the majority of commenting members of the public to oppose Alternative Concept 1 and recommend another alternative with higher user capacity levels and less active restoration.

KEY COMMENT:

The loading of so many controversial actions into Alternative Concept 1 and the inclusion of many of the controversial actions in Alternative Concept 2 will inevitably push the public (and Park planners) towards support of higher user capacity level Alternative Concepts. This is very different from asking the public if they support a plan to reduce SOME of the overnight visitor use facilities currently available in the Park and to reduce some level of day visitor use to end up with considerably less peak total visitor use than at present.

This comment emphasizes that by asking for input on the 5 Alternative Concepts, the structuring of the low use alternatives will clearly result in less support for Alternative Concepts 1 and 2 than if the Park had packaged low use management options without including so many unpopular proposed actions.

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS ABOUT THE PRESENT 5 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT OPTIONS

Park planners have applied certain logic to package specific actions into each alternative and to calculate the resulting visitor use tied to campsites or parking spaces. BUT MANY OF THE DIFFERENT ACTIONS WILL NOT NECESSARILY RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN OVERALL PEAK VISITOR USE IN YOSEMITE VALLEY.

For example, whether or not the Wawona golf course is closed, or whether or not Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is open or closed, or whether or not Curry orchard parking is eliminated or reduced, day use visitation in Yosemite Valley may be almost identical.

What the current 5-Concepts approach fails to make clear to the public is that the Park has the ability to increase parking spaces, increase or maintain the current level with campsites by adding or relocating some out of the river corridor, and to still reduce overall peak visitor use by managing visitors in a different fashion from the present.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITES CAN DIMINISH VALLEY USE For example, the Park could begin actively promoting a well-designed trail system and interpretive education opportunity for Yosemite visitors between the Gin Flat intersection and the current location of Naturebridge. When Naturebridge moves to its new location south of the Valley, the opportunity to create a destination-quality trail system between the Giant Sequoia grove, the old growth mixed conifer forest east of Naturebridge, and the scenic ridge area across from Gin Flat is just one example of a major destination where happy visitors could be encouraged to spend time instead of crowding into the east end of Yosemite Valley during summer periods. A new visionary and inviting small visitor center there could draw visitors to that area and diminish demand for accessing the East end of Yosemite Valley.

Another example could be a shift to some degree to the West Valley? If a quality parking area is approved in the West Valley, the enhancement of the trail system and an increase in ranger-interpretive services in the West Valley could shift visitor demand to some degree away from the East Valley area.

Not all management or administrative options for reducing visitor demand for the East Valley can be addressed or even spelled out in this Merced River WSR Plan, but what can be spelled out is this: JUST BECAUSE THE PARK MAY CHOOSE IN THIS RIVER PLAN TO REDUCE THE USER CAPACITY LEVEL OF YOSEMITE VALLEY DOES NOT IN ANY WAY MEAN THAT THE PARK SERVICE MUST RESTRICT PEOPLE FROM VISITING THE PARK DURING BUSY SUMMER PERIODS. INSTEAD, IT OBLIGATES THE PARK TO DIVERSIFY VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES, TO EDUCATE GATEWAY BUSINESSES AND CUSTOMERS ABOUT SITES AWAY FROM THE VALLEY, AND TO MANAGE USE SO THAT WHEREVER VISITORS ARE IN THE PARK, THEIR EXPERIENCE IS WITHIN A USER CAPACITY LIMIT THAT PROVIDES FOR A RICH EXPERIENCE.

CONCERN THAT PROTECTING AND ENHANCING RIVER VALUES IS NOT MEETING LEGAL DIRECTION TO PROTECT THE RIVER'S "RESOURCE VALUES"

On page 5 of the Alternative Concepts Workbook, planners quote the Guidelines for Wild and Scenic River management. One requirement is that studies will determine how much recreation can be permitted "without adverse impact on the resource values of the river area." The phrase "Resource values" provides wording that reflects the need to protect the natural resources of the river.

"Resource values" are different from the definition of "river values" that NPS identifies as free-flowing water, good water quality, and the ORVs of the river. Resource values can encompass macro-invertebrates, at-risk amphibian species, and other

biological resources that are not directly tied to the ORVs, free flowing conditions, and the ORVs. CSERC asserts that the WSRA guidelines require that user capacity be set at a level that will not permit adverse impact on the resource values of the river area. Again, that requirement for protection of resource values may not be met by simply protecting Sierra sweet bay or protecting the valley oaks at El Portal or by restoring a lot of meadow habitat in certain locations.

Ensuring that "no adverse impacts occur to the resource values of the river area" again ties back to the need to adequately protect and to even enhance protection for habitat for amphibians along tributaries flowing into the Merced River and to reduce disturbance to riparian vegetation along the river and to avoid other significant human disturbance to the web of life within the river corridor.

That leads to a key issue that CSERC has raised numerous times and which has always been rejected (in the most polite and affable way).

FAILURE TO CONSIDER AQUATIC SPECIES LOST IN RECENT YEARS

In both last fall's workbook and the current Concept Alternatives workbook, there is zero discussion of the degradation of the river ecosystem due to the loss of western pond turtle, the foothill yellow-legged frog, and any other native, recently present aquatic species that may be extirpated from Yosemite Valley. This matters for both resource reasons and legal reasons.

When the Merced River was first designated as Wild and Scenic, it is documented that foothill yellow-legged frogs were present within Yosemite Valley, and there is anecdotal evidence that western pond turtles were still present as well. Because those are sensitive species in decline, those species would qualify as Outstandingly Remarkable Values that would deserve protection IF the management plan had been completed within three years as directed by the Act. But now Park planners communicate to our staff that the foothill yellow-legged frog and western pond turtle (although native to the Yosemite Valley ecosystem and river corridor) are no longer part of the existing baseline biological condition. Accordingly, Park planners have told our staff that there is no requirement to manage for those "not present" species or to protect essential habitat for those species.

KEY COMMENT:

CSERC believes that an appropriate and legal Merced River Wild and Scenic River management plan will define and show on maps where critical habitat exists for the expected future recovery of those two potentially lost native aquatic species of river segments in Yosemite Valley, the Merced Gorge, the South Fork Merced River segment, and the El Portal segment. In addition, the DEIS and the eventual selected management plan should fully consider how each action alternative will diminish the human-caused factors (especially related to vehicles and recreational use) that potentially contributed to the decline and loss of those native aquatic species from Yosemite Valley and elsewhere in recent years.

CSERC asks that in the DEIS that this issue be carefully considered and that user capacity "effects" be evaluated in terms of how likely each alternative does or doesn't protect and enhance the critical habitat of those two species (FYLF and WPT).

REALISTIC, FEASIBLE, AND LEGALLY COMPLIANT ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

CSERC has high esteem for the diligent work that Park planning staff has applied to the effort of attempting to craft a range of feasible alternatives for compliance with NEPA. However, due to the inclusion of "poison pill" actions that simply will not be selected by the Park decision-makers (such as eliminating/restoring all of the major sites shown in Alternative Concept 1), it is important for CSERC to provide an example of an Environmentally Preferable Concept Alternative that is both feasible and balanced with the recreational demand for visitation to Yosemite Valley.

The Park has acknowledged that WSRA guidelines require that "public use facilities" be located outside the river area unless they are "?necessary to provide for public use and/or protect the river resource, and location outside the river area is infeasible."

A strict interpretation of the WSRA guidelines would mandate that ALL of the facilities described as "Major Site Restoration Locations" in Alternative Concept 1 would be eliminated or relocated. CSERC asserts that NONE of those facilities can be proven to be both "necessary" for public use and only be feasible inside the river area. But politically, neither Don or supportive Park planners is likely to be willing to select that extreme of an alternative.

Accordingly, CSERC asks Park planning staff to consider the following:

1) With so many strong interests promoting retention of almost every activity, camp, campground, building, and activity within the Wild and Scenic River corridor, the political reality is that a feasible and approvable Alternative can only accomplish so much removal or relocation of truly non-essential facilities, activities, and inappropriate past alterations to the natural system (such as rip-rap) within the river corridor.

Even the most ecologically friendly Environmentally Preferable/Superior Alternative has to be based on political reality.

2) To quantify the greatest environmental and social benefit of removing or altering a facility or use within the river corridor, the

Park needs to show in the upcoming EIS a comparison of the environmental and ORV benefits that would result from taking specific actions versus taking other potential restoration actions.

For example, while removing the Wawona golf course might eventually allow the entire golf course area to be restored to a natural wet meadow habitat, that benefit must be considered in light of the fact that adjacent to the golf course there is already an extensive wet meadow habitat that is being restored and enhanced. Thus the "demand" for restoring all of the original wet meadow habitat for that Wawona area may have less ecosystem benefit than removing the Curry Village Stables or removing the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. Both of those facilities not only have direct impacts to varying degrees on their actual locational sites, but they both cause effects that significantly affect the ecosystem in the river corridor because of use stemming from those facilities and rippling out across the river corridor.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE CONCEPT ALTERNATIVE THAT IS ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY FEASIBLE

CSERC does not claim to have all the expertise or insight to be able to strongly advocate for a certain outcome for every single one of the large number of facilities, services, or actions that are now on the table for consideration in this plan. We do believe that there is value in our strongly encouraging the Park to propose a preferred alternative in the DEIS that reflects the following:

A) AS PLANNED, EVALUATE FOR REMOVAL, REPLACEMENT, OR RE-PURPOSE ALL NON-ESSENTIAL FACILITIES IN THE RIVER CORRIDOR THAT DO NOT CLEARLY PROVIDE A PUBLIC VALUE THAT CANNOT BE PROVIDED ELSEWHERE?. BUT ONLY REMOVE THOSE FACILITIES OR USES IF THAT ACTION WILL ACTUALLY BENEFIT ECOSYSTEM AND RIVER VALUES. DON'T AUTOMATICALLY REMOVE FACILITIES ? ENSURE THAT THE COST AND EFFORT IS JUSTIFIED BECAUSE A MEASURABLE RESTORATION BENEFIT OR RIVER VALUE BENEFIT WILL RESULT.

For example, we happen to agree with Park planners who we have spoken with that the Yosemite Lodge swimming pool is absolutely not necessary or essential for public benefit or to be located within the river corridor. But so what if the pool is removed? If the Yosemite Lodge facility mostly or completely stays, the ecological benefit of having or removing the pool is meaningless. That doesn't mean that a superior use may not be identified for that small spot in the overall river corridor, but is the cost of removal and the loss of a popular way to cool off during summer heat. As one planner mentioned, maybe having that pool results in fewer visitors heading to the river to swim, and thereby it results in less disturbance to river values.

Similarly, CSERC believes that the ink rink is clearly not essential. However, if it is evaluated for removal because it is unnecessary, will its site become a natural, functioning, accessible part of the river/forest ecosystem? If that is unlikely, then why would removing it be beneficial for the Merced River?

Removing the Happy Isles snack stand is certainly justified because it is not "essential," but the obvious question is then to what degree, if any, will removal of that facility lead to true restoration of riparian or ecosystem values? If it will just be a landscaped spot in between heavily used trails, what will removing the snack stand accomplish that is truly beneficial for the natural system? CSERC believes that the focus needs to be on doing restoration where it makes sense and makes a difference, as well as provides a clear message that the Park Service is focusing emphasis on natural conditions and processes.

For example, the removal of a stables operation not only removes major contamination from horse manure that periodically results in elevated levels of fecal coliform pollution washing into Park waters, but stables are a non-essential activity that can easily found across millions of acres of public and private lands outside of Yosemite Park and the river corridor. In addition the impacts of trail compaction, erosion, conflicts with pedestrian hikers, and other issues all justify removing stables because that restoration action will make both a direct and indirect benefit for the river ecosystem and public benefits.

B) EVALUATE IF A FACILITY'S PUBLIC BENEFIT THAT MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PROVIDED ELSEWHERE IN YOSEMITE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE MISSION OF THE NATIONAL PARK OR IF IT IS PRIMARILY CATERING TO THOSE WITH FOND MEMORIES OF ITS USE?

The Wawona Golf Course has strong proponents and economic benefits for certain business operations. But is it either essential to have a golf course within Yosemite Park (NO) or beneficial to the public overall (PROBABLY NOT) to have the golf course? If the golf course was restored to its natural meadow condition, members of the public would not need to pay to make use of the site. More wildlife would likely be able to utilize the more patchy, less uniform habitat. And as the heading asks, is it really the mission of the Park Service and Yosemite Park to provide golf opportunity in Yosemite?

BASED ON ALL THE ABOVE, CSERC RESPECTFULLY PUTS FORWARD THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED "PREFERRED" ALTERNATIVE THAT WE ATTEMPT TO MAKE AS POLITICALLY REALISTIC AND ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AS POSSIBLE.

CSERC supports the following for a preferred alternative: 1) Include the ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL that are identified on pages 8 through 11 of the Alternative Concepts Workbook.

2) Take the following individual actions:

Greenmeyer Sandpit ? restore (as in Concept 1)

Abbieville and Trailer Village ? develop housing for 260 employees and develop remote visitor parking area to provide 200 spaces serviced by regional transit (as in Concepts 3 and 4)

El Portal Valley Oaks ? protect and remove infrastructure as in Concept 1

Yosemite Lodge ? No reduction of lodging will be approved as part of the Merced River Plan. Instead a programmatic plan will be approved for an eventual retrofit and revamping of the entire Yosemite Lodge complex at some point in the near future. A Desired Condition/Outcome of that Yosemite Lodge revitalization plan (as approved by this Merced River Plan) will be to generally retain the same number of lodging units, but to relocate the four current lodging structures out of the floodplain, to enhance the visual harmony of lodge buildings with the meadow complex, and to significantly upgrade and enhance efficiency for traffic movement, parking, and of course, access across the envisioned pedestrian undercrossing to the Falls.

Camp 6 ? Restoration of area closest to the river and relocation to provide 750 spaces (as in Concepts 3, 4, and 5). Site design to be chosen by planning staff based on complex jugging of tradeoffs?.

Housekeeping Camp ? Approve restoration and removal of 180 units to provide greater consistency with WSRA mandated direction, while still retaining 80+ units for historic values, low income camping opportunities, and diversity of visitor experience options.

Former Upper and Lower River Campgrounds ? New campground with 80 drive-in sites and 30 walk-in sites at former Upper and Lower Rivers Campground in the area outside of the 10-year floodplain. This new campground would be designed and constructed so that it minimizes or eliminates any structure or management action that would interfere with the natural flow and reshaping of the river corridor by the Merced River during times of flood.

Curry Orchard Parking ? Partial restoration as in Concept 1 ? remove 220 spaces

Paddling ? private paddling allowed only as long as large woody debris restoration is not constrained? commercial paddling is phased out by 2015

Stoneman Meadow Restoration -- Removal of Southside Drive and realignment of road as in Concept 1 and 2.

Curry Village ? Remove 40 units within rockfall zone and 40 tent cabins (as in Concept 4) for a total of 420 units retained.

North Pines Campground ? Restore 100-year floodplain and remove 80 campsites

Campgrounds in general ? Restore riparian zone in vicinity of campgrounds by removing sites within 100 ft of the ordinary high water mark (Concepts 4 and 5)

Camping ? Concessioner stables area is re-developed as new campground with 40 drive-in sites. Merced High Sierra Camp converted to temporary pack camp and all infrastructure removed. (Concept 3) + Addition of walk-in campground with 60 sites (Concepts 4 and 5)

Bridges ? free-flowing condition of the river improved through the removal of Stoneman and Sugar Pine bridges. (Potential removal of Ahwahnee bridge will be delayed for at least 10 years beyond the removal of Sugar Pine bridge in order to evaluate whether or not ecosystem and free-flowing benefits actually justify its additional removal). Stoneman bridge may be replaced by a far broader bridge, but only if design appears to be sufficient to allow free-flowing hydrology to function.

Stables Area: restoration of Concessioner stables where possible outside of footprint needed for new campground with 40 drive-in sites? commercial trail rides are eliminated.

Merced Lake High Sierra Camp ? Either reduce significantly the number of lodging units at the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp down to 30 beds or less, or preferably, remove that Camp and its related infrastructure. That would remove a core development that is NOT essential and conflicts with the wilderness character and management mandate of the wilderness zone. (Concepts 1 and 2)

Parking ? New Valley Day Use Parking Area at Taft Toe in West Valley created to provide 400-500 overflow parking spaces out of the 100-year floodplain? shuttle service expanded to West Valley during summer busy season.

ESSENTIAL MANAGEMENT COMPONENT CRITICAL TO USER CAPACITY

Limit the number of private vehicles in East Valley during 100 busiest days of season

Provide widespread visitor education, gateway business education, online Park communication, and other outreach to LET THE PUBLIC KNOW THAT ONLY XXX NUMBER OF PRIVATE VEHICLES WILL BE ALLOWED TO ACCESS THE EAST VALLEY EACH DAY during the busy summer use period,

CSERC suggests that this be an adaptive management number, but that it be set initially at 4,000 total private vehicles maximum each day that will be allowed to drive into the East Valley. For vehicles that stay overnight and remain in the East Valley, they count towards the limit. Once real-time data determines that by 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. or whenever on a busy day that the 4,000 count is being reached, Park staff will begin to manage incoming vehicles headed towards the East Valley and provide two options where they approach Taft Toe and the cross-over.

First, those who prefer to simply loop across at Taft Toe to Northside Drive may do so and continue their drive with views of Bridalveil Falls, El Capitan, and the river. However, those who wish to access the East Valley will be steered to the new West Valley Day Use Parking Area where they can park and use timely shuttle service to easily access the East Valley.

Exceptions would be allowed for those who are handicapped (with placards) or other logical choices for exceptions, and they could still drive into the East Valley.

Variation on the above ? Once the selected threshold number of 4000 private vehicles in the East Valley is being approached, entrance stations make clear to incoming private vehicles that they will not be likely allowed to drive into the East Valley. Drivers are encouraged to consider parking their vehicle at Foresta (where a 400 space parking area would be constructed in non-controversial, already-burned area) and shuttle service would provide access throughout Yosemite Valley.

While the current Merced Plan states that out of valley parking options are not being considered in this plan, having a parking area at Foresta combined with a visionary and dynamic new visitor center at that location would make stopping there not only functional, but an exciting destination.

SUMMARY CONCLUSION

If Park planners can look at the Merced River corridor and ask the question, "What would we enthusiastically choose to develop or allow here if this was a clean, pristine state?" it is almost certain that a high percentage of existing campgrounds, buildings, roads, and activities would NOT be located in this natural cathedral of such impressive spiritual and ecological significance.

From the Christian backdrop, Christ threw the money-changers out of the temple. From the perspective of John Muir and those who inspired the national park system, the priority for providing access to the public was to retain spectacular natural environments in a manner that all the puzzle pieces would be present for future generations without being diminished or degraded. From the perspective of those who love a particular use, it is almost certain that most of us are willing to sacrifice our personal preferences if we can honestly accept that our sacrifice will contribute towards a healthier, more sustainable Yosemite Valley and Merced River ecosystem. It is the Park's opportunity to educate the public as to why those sacrifices are pivotally needed.

With this Plan, the outcome will set clear precedent for not just what happens with Yosemite resources and visitor use, but how the Park Service sees its role in managing national parks into the future.

The safe and easy decision space is to remove a lot of non-essential uses that don't have powerful political defenders. The initial list of items to be removed under all Alternatives might fall into that category. It will be far harder, but far more visionary, for Park decision-makers to decide to use the Merced River Plan in Yosemite Park to set a precedent-setting direction by prioritizing protection of the affected environment -- the very essence of why national parks were created in the first place.

CSERC respectfully urges the Park Service to recognize that whenever restrictions on the number of cars, or level of access, or facilities is implemented, there are almost always howls of outrage. But once that new management becomes the norm, skeptical people not only eventually accept it as the new "existing condition," they often become strong advocates for the new status quo.

SET THE BAR HIGH. USE THE LEGAL MANDATES OF THE WSRA, THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN, PAST COURT DECISIONS, AND OTHER LEGAL REQUIREMENTS TO CHOOSE A VISIONARY MANAGEMENT PLAN THAT IS LOOKED BACK UPON IN DECADES TO COME AS AN INSPIRED MOMENT IN NATIONAL PARK HISTORY. ERR ON THE SIDE OF THIS TRULY AWE-INSPIRING, UNIQUE PLACE OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL AND ENJOYMENT. PROTECT AND ENHANCE RESOURCES AND RIVER VALUES.

Correspondence ID: 324 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,23,2012 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Feedback on Alternative Concept #1 If you take out Ahwahnee and Sugar Pine bridges you don't have a safe bike path. How are you going to address this? Keep Merced Lake High Sierra Camp

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #2 Do we really want more RV camping? I think we should add tent sites or RVS should pay more-they use more resources. If you remove Stoneman Bridge it will mean more traffic around- esp if there is no foot bridge access. If you remove Ahwahnee and Sugar Pine bridges there goes your safe bike route. Consider replacing these bridges w/ bike/pedestrian bridges. ENCOURAGE NOT DISCOURAGE BICYCLING! Keep Merced Lake High Sierra Camp Great idea to have boardwalks at El Cap Mdw. Make sure there are viewing platforms.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #3 Put RV sites only with RV sites, not near tent sites or walk-in sites. Tenters should not be subjected to generator noise at any time. Re: #11 Removal of 20 tents from Boystown - I was under the impression all of Boystown was being removed. Keep Merced Lake High Sierra Camp

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #4 Putting walk-in sites near RV sites is wrong. Walk-ins and other tent sites should not have to suffer listening to generators, whatever hours.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #5 500 parking sites @ Valley Day Use?! Make sure there are not too many RV sites in the near proposed campground.

-Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered? Bike route around West end? Keep RV and tent sites separate. Bike routes? Don't see anything on those. keep RV sites lower and encourage tent camping.

Correspondence ID: 325 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,23,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Has NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? NO! Every alternative indicates the removal of Boys' Town. It is now the (relatively) new accomodation for students and chaperones of Nature Bridge (Yosemite Institute). Education is very important for the next generation of kids to know whats here, and Nature Bridge needs inexpensive accomodation for multi-day field trips for the schools.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #3 I would NOT support the removal of the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. This was part of the vision of Stephen Mather to have accomodation in designated Wilderness for visitors not wanting to carry their gear and backcountry camp. The patrons of the High Camps still get a valuable experience, and gain incredable knowledge of the wilderness areas we are trying to protect, especially when they attend a Ranger-guided loop trip or evening program at the Camps! Rangers do make the greatest positive impact at Merced Lake HSC, due to the increased contact at that location.

Correspondence ID: 326 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Feedback on Alternative Concept #1 I agree with the aspect of this plan and some others which propose to remove the Merced lake HS camp, the High Sierra Camps detract from the wilderness experience.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #3 What does "temporary pack camp" mean for Merced lake HS camp? Does it mean it will be phased out or permanent, but with not permanent development?

Correspondence ID: 327 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Has NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? That I can't answer - What was ABBEY'S advice from Desert Solitaire? The presentation however was professional to the point that I am bringing extra workbooks back to my Park Planning and Design class at West Valley College for teaching material. I'm just a student, but I am sure it will finda home in the classroom.

-Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Things that should remain (Ideally under NP management, not a commercial enterprise): Bicycle rentals (reduce traffic); ice rink (you don't get as many visitors in winter, this is magic for the ones that stay); the backpackers camp.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #1 Day use vehicle visitation limits may be necessary, however adding another layer of beurocracy with a permit system is horribly undemocratic. It's our right- we're Americans- to go to Yosemite. We need a better public transportation system to reduce traffic. I think Edward Abbey said, "give them all bicycles." The park does need to be accessible to all. This is representative of our democracy.

Correspondence ID: 328 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,23,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Feedback on Alternative Concept #1 and #2 Paddling is consistent w/ all other forms of recreation allowed in the Parks, including hiking, backpacking, and rock-climbing. Boating should be allowed on the W&S Merced River in its entirety (including the SF Merced). If remote parking and shuttle services are required for Park access, they should provide enough room to transport kayaks, canoes, and rafts. Baoting down the river in a kayak, canoe, or raft is an appropriate use of the entire river corridor. Lift the ban, PLEASE! Require permits on only high use sections that exceed user capacity. Allow boating on the Merced above Navada Falls; require Leave No Trace principles for all wilderness camping. Segment 4 El Portal- Baoting should be allowed on all stretches of W&S rivers. Segments 5,6,7 & 8: SF Merced. Thank you for allowing us to boat the SF Merced below Wawona. It's one of the best class V+ rivers in the state, which means it is also one of the best runs in the world. As a reslut, I support management option 31A.

Correspondence ID: 329 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: -Has NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? Overall, yes.

-Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? In most part.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #1 Two restrictive. Too little overnight lodging and camping for people moderate to low economic means. Will turn Yosemite Valley into a place for the priveledge and the rich. Goes against one of the main reason why Yosemite Valley was set aside in 1864 as part of the original Yosemite Grant - to preserve access to Yosemite Valley to EVERYONE!

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #2 Still to restrictive of a plan

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #3 Removes too much of the economical lodging from Yosemite Valley. Yosemite Valley needs more not less low-cost lodging options.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #4 The proposed parking lot at the El Capitan Crossover location should be removed from the paln and located OUTSIDE of Yosemite Valley.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #5 Concept 5 is the msot future thinking of the plan. The only paln that takes into account that the desire to visit Yosemite will only INCREASE in the future. Yet, there is some major problmes with Concept 5. Mainly the additonal development of a parking lot and a campground in the west Yosemite Valley. No additional development should occur West of Camp 4 and the Swinging Bridge. Any additional parking or campground should either be east of Camp 4 and Swinging Bridge inside Yosemite Valley or placed completely outside of Yosemite Valley itself. Badger Pass and Crane Flat should be considered for the overflow parking instead of the proposed parking lot at the El Capitan crossover.

-Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Correspondence ID: 330 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,30,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Riding horses or mules through the back country in Yosemite has been available to the public for many, many years. It has been enjoyed by people in all walks of life. I respectively request that there not be a change of policy that would end this wonderful privilege.

Correspondence ID: 331 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Fax
Correspondence: DELETE

Correspondence ID: 332 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Fax
Correspondence: Dear Yosemite Planning Department,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions regarding the Merced River Plan Options. Please excuse the fact that I have not used the preferred format, and that my comments are late in arriving. I will try to keep the comments clear and concise. A special thanks to Doyle for his help in getting my comments to the park.

Actions common to all options: River Values - Free Flowing Conditions (page 8) Bridge removal plans were well justified during the webinars, and I understand the fluid dynamics involved well enough to realize why bridge removal is under consideration. I hope that other mitigation efforts will receive full consideration. If the removal of some or all of the targeted bridges is unavoidable, I hope that replacement with a less restrictive structure is considered. When Highway 140 was reconstructed after the 1997 flood, the old rock walls were replaced with concrete walls with faux rock surfaces to mimic the old walls. A similar effort may make the loss of the historic bridges a little easier to accept.

Geological/Hydrological Values (page 8) I strongly support restoration of riparian zones and re-vegetation of river banks. I have been particularly bothered by the degradation of the banks where commerical rafts are launched and removed from the river in the valley.

Biological Values - Riparian Floodplans (page 8) I feel that the boardwalk structures used in meadow restoration have been very positive. They are visually pleasing, and fit well with the need to protect the meadow as well as channel visitors across the meadows while avoiding social trails. I appreciate that the boardwalks also provide for proper drainage, plant protection, and safety for native fauna. I hope that any "hardening" of river access surfaces is as environmentally sensitive. I would not like to see asphalt or concrete ramps installed to continue commercial rafting. I would rather see commercial rafting ended in the valley.

Recreational Values (page 9 - 10_ - I am a strong supporter of the "Leave No Trace" concept. Too many park visitors appear to be unaware of their negative impact on places like Yosemite. I wish it were possible to require that all park visitors go through a class on the reason for following the safety and environmental-protection rules. I have witnessed people walking past warning signs and leaving the viewing areas at the water falls to climb over the boulders and stand under or near the bottom of the falls. Some of these visitors had babies in their arms, or toddlers in tow. Common sense went out the door. I have seen the trash left behind by people, often within a short distance of a trash dumpster. Signs don't seem to work. Maybe a short video showing the damage done and hazards of not following the rules will awaken some of the common sense in many of the visitors. - I suggest using docents (volunteers) to help with visitor education, and monitoring compliance with safety rules in popular locations. Docents should be equipped with radios for contacting rangers or public safety personnel, as needed. Adding RV sites to the park, for use by docents, could make the position attractive for potential docents. Hopefully, the presence of an official looking person will deter some visitors from testing their mortality. - As mentioned before, I would support ending commercial rafting/boating inside the park. Personal water craft should be inspected for potential non-native invasive flora and fauna. A special use permit water craft system could assist in ensuring that water craft have been inspected, before the water craft is set into the river. - There are disturbing problems with the current campground reservation system. Part of the problem may be resolved if and when the number of campsites is increased. In addition to the shortage of sites, currently, there appears to be a problem with internet sales of reservations, at great profit. There may also be a group of renters who have an inside track at reserving sites before the general public is able to do so. The stories of people attempting to access the system at the moment it becomes available, sitting on hold for an extended period of time to discover that all sites are taken when they finally get through. This situation underscores the problems with the system. These issues need to be addressed. - I support, and would use, out of valley parking and shuttle use to alleviate in-valley parking issues. - I support inprovements to facilities that make them accessible for visitors with special needs, and to meet ADA mandates.

Preliminary Alternative Concept 1 River Falues (page 16) - Removal of roads, without the creation of new lanes or roads can only result in added traffic congestion, even with reductions in the number of visitors. Rerouting Some segments of roads could aid in traffic flow and auto-pedestrian conflicts. - I like the idea of restoring over 330 acres of meadow and riparian habitat, but the visitor experience may pay a high price.

Visitor Use and Capacity (page 16) - I would support ending commercial rafting/boating inside the park. Personal watercraft should be inspected for potential non-native invasive flora and fauna. A special use permit water craft system could assist in ensuring that water craft have been inspected, before the water craft is set into the river. - With a deep reduction in visitation compared to numbers in recent years, a reservation system makes sense, however, there are concerns over management of such a system. would reservations be resold on the internet, for profit, like camp site reservations are, now? Currently, when making camp site reservations, some visitors are required to move almost daily, due to an inability to obtain consecutive dates for the same site. Some campers must leave the valley to obtain first-come-first-serve sites in the middle of their visit. Would day-use visitors be unable to obtain consecutive day reservations? I feel thew current reservation systems need improvement before considering adding yet another reservation system. Entrance gate staff will be stressed from dealing with angry visitors when they are turned away. Lines of vehicles will lead to frustration and anger for those with and without reservations. Will the entrance gate staff receive hazard pay? Entrance gates are not staffed 24/7. How would they deal with the wise visitors who enter after the gates are closed for the day? How will they deal with people who enter the park with the intent of passing through without stopping in the valley. Highway 120 is one of a few passes through the Sierras, from Eastern California to the San Joaquin Valley cities and points behond. That being said, reservations are preferable over turning people away at the entrance gates, or allowing visitors to enter the park, only to be turned away once they arrive at their destination (part of option 2), which does not make any sense.

Land Use Management (page 16) - I am not in favor of a reduction in camping sites. - Any reduction in shuttles and bus transportation within the park would be a backward step that I cannot support. Site Specific Management Actions (page 16) #1. I favor restoring the Greenmeyer sandpit, as described. #2. I favor building high density housing for concession employees, as described. I have concerns about the impact this will have on transportation and parking in the valley. I also have concerns on the potential negative impact on the community atmosphere of El Portal. I have spent time in El Portal, and feel that it has a unique atmosphere, which is different than existing concession housing communities. El Portal will also need added services, such as an expanded post office, expanded grocery store, expanded automotives services, etc. The addition of concession employees traveling through the Highway 140 entrance gate will potentially increase congestion at the entrance gate. #3. I favor preservation of the valley oaks in El Portal, as described. #4. I do not favor removal of Yosemite Lodge, beyond not replacing

units lost to the 1997 flood. #5. I favor formalizing the parking in the Camp 6 parking lot, and moving the spaces away from the riparian area. Currently, parking is informal and spread out by careless parking patterns. #6. I favor the reduction of Housekeeping camp and restoration of riparian habitat, as described. #7. I favor restoration of the riparian habitat of Upper and Lower River Campgrounds, but feel that this option is more severe than needed, and removes restoration of some campsite found in other options. #8. I favor the paddling by permit, and ban on commercial paddling, as described. #9, 10, & 11. I favor restoration of part of the Curry Village Orchard, but feel that the reduction in parking is extreme, leaving insufficient parking for 358 cabin units, visitors and employees. I favor removal of Boy's Town, with replacement of the concession employee lodging with high density housing in Item #2, mentioned above. I favor moving Southside Drive to expand restoration of the Meadow. I support removing Curry lodging units that are inside the rock fall zone, and reducing the number of units available to reduce crowding. #12. I favor removing up to 80 campsites in North Pines Campground, if the sites are replaced in less sensitive and less flood prone areas in the valley. I favor restoration of native plants in all campgrounds. #13. I do not favor removal of all of the proposed bridges. The bridges have historic value. I hope that an alternative is found. #14. I favor removal of the valley stables adjacent to North Pines Campground, but I do not favor removal of the High Sierra Camp.

Preliminary Alternative Option 2 River Values (page 18) - Removal of roads, without the creation of new lanes or roads can only result in added traffic congestion, even with reductions in the number of visitors. - I like the idea of restoring over 290 acres of meadow and riparian habitat, but the visitor experience may pay a high price.

Visitor Use and Capacity (page 18) - With a deep reduction in visitation compared to numbers in recent years, a reservation system makes sense, however, there are concerns over management of such a system. Would reservations be resold on the Internet, for profit, like camp site reservations are, now. Currently, when making camp site reservations, some visitors are required to move almost daily, due to an inability to obtain consecutive dates for the same site. Some campers must leave the valley to obtain first-come-first-serve sites in the middle of their visit. Would day visitors be unable to obtain consecutive day reservations? I feel the current reservation systems need improvement before considering adding yet another reservation system.

A reservation system is preferable over turning people away at the entrance gates. Allowing visitors to enter the park, only to be turned away once they arrive at their destination does not make any sense.

- I would support ending commercial rafting/boating inside the park. Personal water craft should be inspected for potential non-native invasive flora and fauna. A special use permit water craft system could assist in ensuring that water craft have been inspected, before the water craft is set into the river.

Land Use Management (page 18) - I am not in favor of a reduction in camping sites. - Any reduction in shuttles and bus transportation within the park would be a backward step that I cannot support.

Site Specific Management Actions (page 18) #1. I favor restoring the Greenmeyer sandpit, as described. #2. I favor building high density housing for concession employees, as described. #3. I favor moving the concession offices out of the valley, as described. #4. No opinion. #5. I am in favor of creating short term parking in the Yosemite Lodge area specifically for visitation to Yosemite Falls. #6. I favor formalizing the parking in the Camp 6 parking lot, and moving the spaces away from the riparian area. Currently, parking is informal and spread out by careless parking patterns. #7. I support restoration of riparian habitat in Housekeeping Camp, and favor converting some or all of the area to day-use picnicking facilities. #8. I favor restoration of the riparian habitat of Upper and Lower River Campgrounds, but feel that this option is more severe than needed, and removes restoration of some campsite found in other options. I favor restoration of the Ahwahnee Meadow. I have reservations about the removal of Northside Drive, without additional lanes on remaining roadways to address traffic congestion. #9. I would support ending commercial rafting/boating inside the park. Personal water craft should be inspected for potential non-native invasive flora and fauna. A special use permit water craft system could assist in ensuring that water craft have been inspected, before the water craft is set into the river. #10, 11 & 12. I favor restoration of part of the Curry Village Orchard, but feel that the reduction in parking is extreme, leaving insufficient parking for 440 cabin units, visitors and employees. I favor removal of Boy's Town, with replacement of the concession lodging with high density housing in item #2, mentioned above. I favor moving Southside Drive to expand restoration of the Meadow. I support removing Curry lodging units that are inside the rock fall zone, and reducing the number of units available to reduce crowding. #13. I support removal of campsites within 100 feet, and not 150 feet of the normal high water line, so I am not in favor of this action. #14. I favor the addition of special RV camping loops, with hook-ups (added fee) and would like to see enough spaces to host docents/volunteer to help with visitor education and monitoring, as well as regular visitors. #15. I do not favor removal of all of the proposed bridges. The bridges have historic value. I hope that an altnerative is found. #16. I favor removal of the valley stables adjacent to North Pines Campground, but I do not favor removal of the High Sierra Camp.

Preliminary Alternative Option 3 River Value (page 20) - I approve of the plans to restore riparian habitat. - I approve using alternative river flow choices over bridge removal, but can reluctantly accept removal of 2 of the 3 targeted bridges.

Visitor Use and Capacity (page 20) - I do not approve of the continuation of commercial rafting/paddling. I would support ending commercial rafting/boating inside the park. Personal water craft should be inspected for potential non-native invasive flora and fauna. A special use permit water craft system could assist in ensuring that water craft have been inspected, before the water craft is set into the river. - I approve of a visitor use capacity of 17000 visitors a day during peak days. I am not certain that limiting and/or charging for east valley parking will ensure that visitor numbers do not exceed this number. - I would support paying to park in the east valley, and providing free remote parking in El Portal. El Portal is just a single entrance community. A similar arrangement would also need to exist at the highway 41 entrance, and the highway 120 entrances. How will they deal with people who enter the park with the intent of passing through without stopping in the valley. Highway 120 is

one of a few passes through the Sierras, from eastern California to the San Joaquin Valley cities and points beyond.

Land Use Management (page 20) - I support the increase in camping by 41%. - I support the use of shuttles for transportation inside the valley. I favor expansion of the existing routes to include stops in the west valley. - I favor building high density housing for concession employees, as described. I have concerns about the impact this will have on transportation and parking in the Valley. I also have concerns on the potential negative impact on the community atmosphere of El Portal. I have spent time in El Portal, and feel that it has a unique atmosphere, which is different than existing concession housing communities. El Portal will also need added services, such as an expanded post office, expanded grocery store, expanded automotive services, etc. The addition of concession employees traveling through the Highway 140 entrance gate will potentially increase congestion at the entrace gate.

Site Specific Management Actions (page 20) #1. I favor restoring the Greenmeyer sanpit, as described in options 1 and 2. #2, and 3. I favor building high density housing for concession employees, and remote parking for park visitors, as described. I favor moving concession general administration offices to El Portal. El Portal is not a large town. Where will all of ehse new facilities, and visitor parking be placed? #4. I favor placing RV camp sites west of Yosemite Lodge. Access to hook-up utilities would be close by. #5. I support adding walk-in camp sites to Camp 4. Camp 4 has been first-come-first-served, in the past. Will an adequate number of parking spaces still be available for transporting camping equipment? Moving the VUA booth to the entrance gate of the parking lot can help with preventing unregistered visitors from using the designated camp 4 parking-lot. #6. I favor formalizing the parking in the Camp 6 parking lot, and moving the spaces away from the riparian area. Currently, parking is informal and spread out by careless parking patterns. #7. I support restoration of riparian habitat in Housekeeping Camp, and favor converting some or all of the area to day-use picnicking facilities. #8. I favor the River Campgrounds no-drive-in camp sites, as described. #9. I approve using alternative river flow choices over bridge removal, but can reluctantly accept removal of 2 of the 3 targeted bridges. #10 and 11. I favor removal of Boy's Town, with replacement of the concession lodging with high density housing in item #2, mentioned above. I favor moving Southside Drive to expand restoration of the Meadow. I support removing Curry lodging units that are inside the rock fall zone, and reducing the number of units available to reduce crowding. #12. I favor placing RV camp sites west of Yosemite Lodge. Access to hook-up utilities would be close by. #13. I favor removal of the valley stables, and redevelopment of the area to additional campsites. I do not support removal of or change of use for the High Sierra Camp.

Preliminary Alternative Concept 4 River Values (page 22) - I approve of the plans to restore riparian habitat. - I approve using alternative river flow choices over bridge removal, but can reluctantly accept removal of 2 of the 3 targeted bridges.

Visitor Use and Capacity (page 22) - I would support ending commercial rafting/boating inside the park. Personal water craft should be inspected for potential non-native invasive flora and fauna. A special use permit water craft system could assist in ensuring that water craft have been inspected, before the water craft is set into the river. - I approve of a visitor use capacity of 20,k500, or some number between 17,000 and 20,500. - Diverting traffic to the west end of the valley or Abbieville would be difficult, since visitors may attempt to avoid the lost time of driving back to the west, by parking illegally. I only see this working if visitors are stopped, when east valley parking lots are full, and directed to the closest available parking lot.

Land Use and Management (page 22) - I prefer the 41% camping increase in Option 3. - I favor expanding transit options within the valley, and between key locations on highways 41, 120 and 140. - I favor building high density housing for concession employees, as described. I have concerns about the impact this will have on transportation and parking in the valley. I also have concerns on the potential negative impact on the community atmosphere of El Portal. I have spent time in El Portal, and feel that it has a unique atmosphere, which is different than existing concession housing communities. El Portal will also need added services, such as an expanded post office, expanded grocery store, expanded automotive services, etc. The addition of concession employees traveling through the Highway 140 entrance gate will potentially increase congestion at the entrance gate.

Site Specific Management Actions (page 22) #1. ??? #2. I favor building high density housing for concession employees, and remote parking for park visitors, as described. I favor providing visitor parking in El Portal for overflow purposes. #3. I favor preservation of the valley oaks in El Portal, as described. #4. I favor providing up to 200 over-flow parking sites in the west valley, and expanding the shuttle service to the west valley. #5 and 6. I favor limiting access to El Cap Meadow by building boardwalks and viewing platforms, as well as fencing off sensitive meadow habitat. I favor permitting curb parking at the border of the meadow, as opposed to day-use parking west of Yosemite Lodge. #7. I favor formalizing the parking in the Camp 6 parking lot, and moving the spaces away from the riparian area. Currently, parking is informal and spread out by careless parking patterns. #8. I favor restoration of riparian habitat at Housekeeping Camp, and a greater reduction in units than described. #9. I favor more campsite restoration beyond 100 feet of normal high water in both Upper and Lower River Campground, and restoration of the riparian habitat. #10. I favor restoration of and structured improvements near the public beaches to reduce temptation to future degrade the river banks. #11. I support removing Curry lodging units that are inside the rock fall zone, and reducing the number of units available to reduce crowding. #12. I support removal of compsites within 100 feet, and not 150 feet of the normal high water line, so I am not in favor of this action. #13. I favor expanding Upper Pine campground to create additional regular camp sites along the east border, but outside the 100 foot normal high water line. I support restoration of the riparian habitat along the river. I favor placing RV camp sites west of Yosemite Lodge. Access to hook-up utilities would be close by.

Preliminary Alternative Option 5 River Value (page 24) - I would like to see more restoration than indicated in this option. - I approve of the free flowing river plans with retention of the bridges, which have historic value.

Visitor Use and Capacity (page 24) - I feel that expanding picnicking along the river is aninvitation to additional degradation of the river and river banks. I do not approve of the continuation of commercial rafting/paddling. I would support ending commercial rafting/boating inside the park. Personal water craft should be inspected for potential non-native invasive flora and

fauna. A special use permit water craft system could assist in ensuring that water craft have been inspected, before the water craft is set into the river. - I feel that the valley carrying capacity has already been exceeded, and that 24,400 visitors a day would only increase the damage and congestion in the park. I do not favor this option. - I feel that building over 200 over-flow parking spaces in the west valley would be a degradation.

Land Use Management (page 24) - I do not support increasing lodging by 61% in the valley. I favor reducing lodging in Curry Village, and retaining the post flood number in the Yosemite Lodge and Ahwahnee facilities. - I favor building high density housing for concession employees, as described. I have concerns about the impact this will have on transportation and parking in the valley. I also have concerns on the potential negative impact on the community atmosphere of El Portal. I have spent time in El Portal, and feel that it has a unique atmosphere, which is different than existing concession housing communities. El Portal will also need added services, such as an expanded post office, expanded grocery store, expanded automotive services, etc. The addition of concession employees traveling through the Highway 140 entrance gate will potentially increase congestion at the entrance gate. - I favor preservation of the valley oaks in El Portal, as described.

Site Specific Management Actions #1. I favor building high density housing for concession employees, as described. I have concerns about impact this will have on transportation and parking in the valley. I also have concerns on the potential negative impact on the community atmosphere of El Portal. I have spent time in El Portal, and feel that it has a unique atmosphere, which is different than existing concession housing communities. El Portal will also need added services, such as an expanded post office, expanded grocery store, expanded automotive services, etc. The addition of concession employees traveling through the Highway 140 entrance gate will potentially increase congestion at the entrance gate. #2. I favor preservation of the valley oaks in El Portal, as described. #3. I favor providing up to 200 over-flow parking sites in the west valley, and expanding the shuttle services to the west valley. #4. I favor limiting access to El Cap Meadow by building boardwalks and viewing platforms, as well as fencing off sensitive meadow habitat. #5. I favor considering this site for car camping, and group camping with small RVs permitted, and without hook-ups. I suggest that the campsite number not exceed 50 to avoid crowded conditions. #6. I do not favor increasing the lodging units over current numbers, and would like to see the area west of the lodge turned into RV camping sites with hook-ups, rather than extensive visitor parking spots. #7. I favor placing RV camp sites west of Yosemite Lodge. Access to hook-up utilities would be close by. #8. I favor formalizing the parking in the Camp 6 parking lot, and moving the sapces away from the riparian area. Currently, parking is informal and spread out by careless parking patterns. #9. I favor restoration of riparian habitat at Housekeeping Camp, and a greater reduction in units than described. #10. I favor campsite restoration beyond 100 feet of normal high water in both Upper and Lower River Campground, and restoration of the riparian habitat. #11. I support removing Curry lodging units that are inside the rock fall zone, and reducing the number of units available to reduce crowding. #12. I support removal of campsites within 100 feet, and restoration of riparian habitat and native vegetation in nad around campgrounds. #13. I favor expanding Upper Pine campground to create additional regular camp sites along the east border, but outside the 100 foot normal high water line.

Correspondence ID: 333 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,01,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is difficult to put together thoughts and opinions on the Merced River Plan (MRP) without being cynical. Although I am sure that the team of professionals that put the plan together approached their duties with the utmost diligence and forethought, what has been presented to the public lacks vision, creativity and a basic understanding of what the public wants and needs to have a favorable National Park experience. It is almost like the team never spent a summer Saturday afternoon in the Park watching and querying the public as to their needs.

Park leadership has a tough job in a time when shrinking budgets and growing government dissatisfaction is displayed on a daily basis. The population of the country has grown by tens of millions of people over the past half decade, yet park visitation has shown small growth or been stagnant. The National Park Service recognizes this and seems to be taking steps to identify why this is, but it is clear to me that plans like the MRP contribute to this negative view of National Parks in the eyes of the public.

As I read through the MRP, it strikes me that the team seems to have taken a page out of today's political playbook. The options seem to be at polar extremes whether by design or by accident, it makes discussing the options and creating a comprehensive, manageable and productive plan more difficult to achieve.

As a concession employee I am one of the luckiest people in the world. I get to live, work and play in this wonderful place. But, beyond that, I get to interact with guests from all over the world. Seeing the faces of visitors that saved for a lifetime to visit Yosemite is amazing. Talking with guests that find Yosemite miraculous is one of the most rewarding experiences one can have. It would be a shame to have these experiences limited needlessly.

I believe that the MRP needs to protect the resources of the park and enhance the visitor's experience.

Gone are the days when visitors took a week or two of vacation and spent time in a National Park. Today people are lucky to have a couple of days off between jobs to visit special places. This has contributed to the average visit to the park being measured in hours not days.

Park leaders need to establish opportunities to expose the visitors to the most the park has to offer in the least amount of time.

Leaders also need to recognize that they compete in today's tourism business with all-inclusive destinations that have been designed and maintained as pristine as National Parks yet may not be natural.

The Park can serve as a model for communities that share the focus on preservation and environmental sensitivity. Eliminating and redistributing resources outside of the park would severely limit the Park's ability to positively influence behavior in communities throughout the world.

It would seem that the Park should be seeking ways to improve the visitor experience; expand the opportunities for visitors AND protect the resources and mitigate any damage caused by visitation. Mitigation should be limited to restoration and proper protection of resources, facilities and services to ensure a positive experience by the guests. Reduction of facilities and services to the public or in any way limiting the opportunities for public enjoyment of the park should only be considered as a last resort.

In reviewing the options presented, it appears that there is a bias against visitors who wish to utilize concession services. It seems that the principle objective is to reduce concession operations, which will in effect reduce the public's opportunity for a quality National Park experience.

Looking at the major points of the MRP, I would like to offer my concerns regarding the removal of facilities and services in each alternative:

(Please see Attachment 1)

The elimination of the many of the concession operations would severely limit the potential scope of the Park's shuttle system under its current funding scenario.

A major factor in the acceptance of public transportaiton in the United States is the concern that public transportation is not convenient, not safe, and doesn't operate in an effective manner (is the bus there when I want to go?).

A transit system to support Yosemite would also require the construction of massive parking areas in the surrounding communities altering their local land use policies. In addition, the requirements for more transportation would increase the number of employees serving the needs of the park and its visitors. This increases the need for housing and other infrastructure improvements within the park influence and surrounding communities.

Concession Garage Operations

One of the options is to relocate the Concession Garage activities from its current location to another location within the Valley. This presents some serious concerns for maintaining the quality of the Parks shuttle operations and the Concession fleet management.

Currently there is no facility within the Valley that could effectively replace the Village Garage complex and enable the Concession Company to effectively maintain commercially regulated vehicles.

Currently, the complex consists of a garage facility that allows for four buses to be simultaneously worked on indoors and a fifth vehicle to be maintained utilizing an outdoor pit.

Requirements of working on these highly specialized pieces of equipment are that a mechanic must be able to get under the bus either by lifting the bus off the ground or by rolling the bus over an inspection pit.

Many of the alternatives suggest that the shuttle operation be expanded to include more frequent or additional service to the west end of the valley. This would place additional burdens on a maintenance program for the shuttle fleet.

Moving the shuttle maintenance or base of operations outside the Valley would increase vehicular traffic on park roads and reduce the effectiveness of the shuttle program by as much as 25%. That in turn would require more housing and more infrastructure to support expanded employee requirements.

Moving customer garage service including towing out of the park may cause unusually long delays on park roads as tow trucks would add one hour minimum to response times during the peak season. Also with the road closure history of Highway 140 through the years, this too would add to response time.

Alternative Concepts

The distribution of the individual concepts into the five plans is interesting. It would seem that if an alternative is acceptable under any scenario, it should be included in all of them.

The Park belongs to the public. Park managers have a difficult role to fill in securing the opportunity for visitor satisfaction balanced with preservation for the future. Preservation for the future cannot include the elimination of opportunity in the present. In other words, closing facilities and services should not be an option.

Full Funding Provision

I would strongly recommend that the Park adopt the position that there should be no removal of any assets or services prior to the full funding of any adopted plan.

Comments regarding each proposed Concept begin on the following page.

(Please see Attachment 2)

In closing, I offer my expertise to the Park Service to assist in the development of a comprehensive plan that does not penalize or restrict the visitors opportunities to view and experience Yosemite. I understand the need to protect the resource and provide for the enjoyment of future generations. I believe that the creative trust of the Park Service mixed with the commitment of the community can produce a viable plan to protect and enhance the visitor experience.

Please feel free to contact me for clarification of points contained herein.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 334 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts Business
Received: Apr,30,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Don

DNC Parks and Resorts at Yosemite ("DNC:) is pleased to provide input on the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook dated spring 2012 for the Merced River Plan ("Workbook"). While we do have opinions on the individual plan actions described in the Workbook, our comments will focus on the elements of the planning process and plan assumptions where we believe improvements can be made or where we do not understand the logic for the conclusions that have been reached.

NPS indicated in it planning sessions that many of the actions being considered were as a result of the language in Footnote 5 to the 9th Circuit Court's 2008 opinion. We question how that could be the case. Footnote 5 is factually in error on a number of usses and fundamentally misstates the situation. The "degradation" referred to in the footnote describes facilities, structures or activities that were legally built or were being performed consistent with National Park Service regulations and federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations at the time the Merced River was named Wild and Scenic.

Footnote 5 refers to the "degradation ..... under the regime of interim limits proposed b y NPS ..." Again, this is factually in error as each of the examples in footnote 5 were in place prior to the Merced's designation as Wild and Scenic and it is not possible to degrade a river under the WSRA prior to a river's designation. Further, the results of the baseline study on the Merced River performed by the NPS indicates the river is in better condition and that the ORVs have been enhanced due to a number of specific NPS projects since the time the river was designated Wild and Scenic. There are many examples in the Wild and Scenic River System where infrastructure, activities and facilities in place at the time of designation are not the target for justification or considered "degradation". One example is the 23 miles of the American River (named Wild and Scenic in 1981) flowing through downtown Sacramento.

If there are management decisions or clear indicators that changes to some of the conditions described in footnote 5 enhance ORV's, those decisions and reasons should be described. It seems illogical and not in the public interest to create a plan that is based on misstatement of the facts and there must be other remedies to correct this misunderstanding.

On an overall basis, we believe that traditional visitor experiences ought to continue and that the Workbook does not appropriately value a range of experiences. Yosemite visitors are old and young and fit and infirm and single and married and traveling alone and in groups and with extended families. They are rich and poor and speak multiple languages. Have experiences appropriate for each of these visitors been considered?

NPS released a document titled "A Call to Action" in the summer of 2011 to guide NPS activities, actions and programs in preparation for NPS 100th anniversary in 2016. This Call to Action has broad statements of principle, as well as specific activities designed to make NPS and the country's national parks more relevant in the next 100 years and beyond. One of the main goals is "Connecting People to Parks" under which the NPS calls to: "Expand the use of parks as places for healthy outdoor recreation that contribute to people's physical, mental, and social well-being." It would appear that the limitations that are being considered to comploy with interpretations of footnote 5 are not consistent with NPS national goals or with the intent

of our national parks.

For instance, elimination of the ice rink is called out under all options. This activity has no impact on summer days when visitation is highest. The ice rink is a valued and unique traditional experience for Yosemite's winter visitors. For example, the Curry Village Ice Rink was named third in a 2012 article by "Travel and Leisure Magazine" on a list of 15 outdoor rinks from around the world, citing its tradition and the views of Half Dome and Glacier Point as the motivating factors for its inclusion. Removal is certainly not required by WSRA. What are the underlying reasons for this action and how might the public weigh in on this subject?

Elimination of various pools is called out under all options, but not all the pools either in Yosemite Valley or at Wawona. What is the motivation and reasoning for this differentiation--footnote 5? Eliminating pools will likely increase the level of interaction with the Merced River by those seeking a water experience, with a resulting impact to the river and possibly creating an issue of visitor safety. Certainly, many visitors have a high quality visitor experience beside the Yosemite Lodge pool while gazing at Yosemite Falls

We are pleased that the NPS is seeking public input, but question that the Workbook is an appropriate vehicle to do so. The discussion of issues in the Workbook is very complex and the range of options quite wide, although not as wide or complete as we believe appropriate, as discussed below. The limited time available to read and understand the options will certainly limit the number of people who might otherwise respond, probably restricts meaningful input to a small group who is likely already engaged in this planning process and probably makes a local or regional issue out of what is a national matter. Further, the Workbook may create confusion when the EIS is released in that individuals may believe they have already commented or add to the planning fatigue that must already be in place.

The Workbook also creates confusion on where this fits in the planning process. Will a comment on a particular action described in the Workbook also apply to the identical action if it is described in the EIS, or must a person resubmit since the Workbook is not an official part of the NEPA or MRP process?

The Workbook indicates it is about exploring a range of options, yet there are a number of actions that are common to all plans. Is the NPS interested in comments on those "actions" common to all? Is there information that will indicate how those actions were determined and the benefit of those actions relative to other actions? Many of the actions identified call for "relocation". Without understanding the "where" or "how" or "how much", is it really possible to determine net benefit and whether the proposed action is feasible? Will these "common to all" actions get a fair evaluation as we go forward?

As an example of where a range of options seems to be overlooked, the Yosemite Village Sports Shop is called to be repurposed under all the options, et some of the options dramatically increase the amount of parking near and the access to this facility. This retail shop and function is specifically called out in the current concession contract and meets the test of "appropriate and necessary". What conditions changed where this function became unnecessary in all of the options? With the expanded parking near this location in some of the alternatives, perhaps the repurposing should include consideration of this as food service or options to meet other visitor requirements and needs? This is but a small example where we believe more consideration should be given to the cause and effect of the various options being explored.

We do not believe the benefits ascribed to actions are well considered and that a detailed review and understanding will produce different conclusions. For instance, page 13 indicates "...relocating office spaces to El Portal and Mariposa will decrease impacts on the transit system and reduce commuting traffic to El Portal and Yosemite Valley." The truth of this statement rests entirely on the function served by the office space. For instance, the "Primary Concession General Office" contains DNC's operations, human resource and training centers, among other functions. Relocation of those functions require daily interface and interaction with employees providing visitor services in Yosemite Valley, as well as direct supervision, planning and inspection of the services being provided. Absentee management is a formula for failure. Further, almost all of DNC's administrative functions are already outside Yosemite Valley, either located in our Fresno Call Center or at our Corporate office in Buffalo, which provides legal, human resource, IT and senior management support, among many other support functions.

During the discussion sessions, language was used that creates concern that the WSRA is being used inappropriately as a reason for certain actions. For instance, we have heard numerous references to "restoring ORV's" as a goal of the plan. That is not called for in the WSRA. Another example is discussion of decisions to "relocate" major facilities outside the river corridor. The language quoted in the WSRA refers to decisions to "locate" facilities in or outside the river corridor. A third example is the desire to "enhance" free flowing conditions. The WSRA calls for "protection" of free flowing conditions. If there are NPS policies or objectives that make a decision to relocate or repurpose a structure or facility a preferred option, those reasons and judgments should be clearly stated and not ascribed to a requirement to comply with WSRA requirements where there is none.

Based on information in the Workbook, information presented in the public comment sessions and general discussions in open house sessions, we do not believe that there is a comprehensive understanding of the complexity, value and space requirements for the services the concessioner provides. For instance, the Workbook speaks of relocation of the Concession Services Garage, yet we are not aware of a study to understand the space, layout or terrain requirements of this facility. We would welcome the chance to meet with your planning staff in whatever public forum is available to assure that full information is obtained so the best answer can be derived. This same principle applies to obtaining appropriate information for housing design, needs, employee requirements and alternative locations; for bicycle and raft rental operations; general office building functions; and any number of other issues that may arise during the course of those conversations.

On a conceptual basis, we believe that an overnight experience has great value as compared with a day visit and encourage consideration of options that increase the opportunity to spend the night, whether through camping or in other overnight accommodations. Further, with appropriate planning, overnight visitors have less impact than day users because they are able to more effectively separate from their cars and engage with Yosemite in an appropriate fashion. As a gauge, there are currently 39% fewer campsites in Yosemite Valley than called for in the 1980 General Management Plan ("GMP") and 10% fewer overnight accommodations of other types. The numbers called for in the GMP were set after careful consideration and we encourage a full discussion of why those numbers might be inappropriate today.

On an overall basis, we applaud the effort to plan to a design level and determine ways to monitor adherence to that design. We also believe that the improvements in traffic flow will greatly enhance the visitor experience and the perceptions of crowding due simploy to inadequate crosswalks and road systems.

We greatly value our opportunity to provide authorized visitor services and believe we do so in a manner that is kind to the environment and that the services have value to the visiting public. The NPS is charged with the very difficult task of providing for the conservation and enjoyment of our national parks and does a remarkable job in achieving that difficult mandate.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on this Workbook. We hope that our comments will prove beneficial in developing a plan that is best for Yosemite today and for future generations.

Your truly,

[redacted] Present DNCP&P at Yosemite, Inc.

Correspondence ID: 335 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hello Again,

Thanks as always for your efforts to develop a strong plan for the Merced as a Wild and Scenic River.

As I said at the San Francisco meeting, the single most important aspect to the plan is the management of visitation. The problem is not people it's cars! The current emphasis on making it easier to drive in and around the valley stands in stark contradiction to the 1980 Master Plan and the requirements of the Wild and Scenic River Act. Particularly when viewed in the perspective of a long term plan, the optimizing of parking and traffic flow to meet current demand comes up short. Think of the situation in 10 years or 50 years from now. (It's perhaps ironic that your SF meeting was held just doors away from the Long Now offices - those folks want us to think in hundreds and thousands of years!)

I am very dissappointed that limiting private vehicles in the valley has been dropped. As I mentioned in the SF meeting, this is a drastic decision requiring extraordinary justification - since it goes against the Master Plan recommendation.

One very important element missing from the proposals was cost and schedule. I think one major factor in the decision to continue to allow private vehicles was the $100 million price tag of a shuttle fleet. But rather than seeing the cost of an extensive quiet electric shuttle system as a problem take it as a opportunity for a public - private joint venture. Challenge American car makers to build a quiet, durable, efficient hydrogen fuel cell or electric vehicle to serve to ferry visitors from staging areas just outside the park. The winner gets to use their success in advertising their public spirit. I think the Red Buses in Glacier were restored by Ford in a partnership with the park.

It is vital to first decide what must be done to protect the river, then set a schedule to make sure conditions do not deteriorate beyond repair, and then determine the cost. Then either find the money from congress, or from public - private cooperation. But the cost can not be allowed to determine the scope of the preservation projects. If the cost is so high as to be politically unpalatable, so be it. The river must be preserved.

Thanks again,

p.s. I am also worried that the peace and quiet and solitude resources are not captured as ORV's. These values are so critical to the river corridor that I wish there was a way to elevate them to something more that conditions to be monitored.

p.p.s I have attached our previous comments for refererence.

Correspondence ID: 336 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Although I have a tiny voice if at all, I can honestly say the best way to understand and gain a full understanding and

appreciation of Yosemite and nature, wilderness, the High Sierra Camps within Yosemite Natl. Park are a must.

Perhaps unrelated to this planning, I'd also state the continued lack of a plan to remove the dam at Hetch Hetchy is far more important and easily would be the greatest gain in nearly 100 years.

Correspondence ID: 337 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To whom it may concern: I would like to submit a brief comment on the Merced River Plan. I realize comments were due last week, but I'm hoping you will accept my comments even though they are late.

I understand that there are 5 options being proposed to guide the management of the Merced River, specifically with regards to the High Sierra Camps - Merced Camp in particular. I wish to express my support for the option that preserves the HSC - Merced Camp.

Last summer I had the great experience of hiking the High Sierra Camp loop and it was the best thing I have done in a very long time. I took the trip with friends, who would never have gone into the Yosemite back country if it weren't for the established HSCs. Without my friends, I would not have undertaken such a trip by myself. The trip, made possible by the HSC, was an incredible experience and the country I went through was spectacular. One of the treasures I took away from the trip, was how special it is to travel and experience a place that has remained unchanged through time. So very much around my day to day life is/has changed and will change. It is so important to me to experience a place that is unchanged and will remain unchanged through the future. And it was the existence of the HSC that allowed me to be a part of it, even for a short time. Given, what the HSCs provided me, I wish everyone could have the same experience.

In closing, I urge to retain the HSCs, including the Merced River HSC.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to weigh in on decisions regarding the HSC - Merced River Camp. Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 338 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Merced River Plan - Preliminary Alternative Concepts. I was happy to have had the opportunity to attend the March 28, 2012 workshop in the Valley where five draft alternatives were presented. I have also reviewed the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook. I was gratified to see that many of the suggestions provided at earlier workshops found their way into at least one or two of each of the Preliminary Alternatives. I found that each of the five draft alternatives contained good ideas as well as areas of concern. I would therefor appreciate it if you and your planning staff would take my few comments into consideration:

In general, I tend to lean toward Preliminary Alternative 4 as a good starting point. I think it strikes a more reasonable balance between protecting the resource, and providing the opportunity for the public to enjoy it. While Preliminary Alternatives 1or 2 may be more appealing from an environmental standpoint, I believe they would be found unacceptable by both the general public and our elected public officials, making them impossible to implement.

Within the context of Alternative 4, I am recommending the following additional items be considered: ? Reroute Southside Drive and restore Stoneman Meadow with corresponding reduction of tent cabins at Camp Curry to accommodate the realignment (this should be done regardless of the alternative selected), ? Remove the Stable and Kennel adjacent to North Pines Campground and relocate campsites to that area, ? Site specific Action number 7 from Alternative 5, RV camping adjacent to the Lodge. This is the site of the old Lodge cabins and is already disrupted, a good fit for RV'ers.

Within the context of Alternative 4, I am recommending that the following items not be considered: ? West Valley Day Use overflow parking area. I see no way that this would look anything but horrible, ? Camp 6 restoration. I would prefer seeing the parking in Camp 6 pulled away from the river, reduced in capacity if need be, but kept in that general area due to its proximity to Yosemite Village. NPS might be able to squeeze more parking out of a reduced Camp 6 parking lot by paving and striping the lot. Spaces would be more clearly defined and visitors would be more inclined to be a little more careful about how they park and how much room they take up.

Concerning the existing Valley campgrounds, they are in terrible condition and need attention. I had the opportunity to talk to a couple from Germany, the day before the March 28 workshop. They have been traveling across the U.S. for the past year visiting as many of the National Parks as possible. That evening they were in Upper Pines. They could not believe the condition it is in considering the other Parks they have visited. In the process of creating new camp sites NPS needs to rework existing facilities, currently they are not an enjoyable experience. With regard to transportation/circulation issues within the Valley I am supportive of the proposed pedestrian undercrossings of Northside Drive at Camp 6 and Yosemite Lodge. If a turning circle is installed at Northside Drive and Sentinel Drive, a pedestrian undercrossing of Northside Drive at this location may be a good idea as well. With regard to the proposed turning circle, it is a good idea in theory but many have not mastered them as of yet and if it gets jammed up during peak season, all traffic in the eastern part of the Valley could come to a halt. Another alternative

to consider is portable traffic lights which can be used in the summer months and put into storage when not needed.

Valley shuttle bus routes need to be expanded to include Tunnel View and various points in between. During the summer months NPS may wish to consider running shuttles to Glacier Point to assist in reducing back and forth traffic. With bike racks installed on Valley shuttles, NPS should consider expanding both Northside and Southside Drives to accommodate bike lanes. This would provide a more safe and enjoyable biking experience. More people on bikes mean fewer cars on the roads.

At the March 28, 2012 workshop, the issue of economic/social justice was raised and I think it is an important one to keep in mind regardless of what the final proposal looks like. Even before the most recent downturn in the economy, Yosemite was becoming too expensive for many families. With modest accommodations running from over $100 an evening at Curry to well over $200 an evening at the Lodge, many families are just priced out of their National Park. For many, camping is the only financially feasible way they can enjoy the park. NPS needs to take this into consideration and do everything possible to preserve as much of the existing camping and Housekeeping units as possible, and expanding the number of low impact walk in camp sites as possible, while protecting the Merced River corridor.

Lastly, I found the list of facilities and services proposed for removal, relocation or repurposing found on pages 10 and 11 of the workbook somewhat confusing. Most I am okay with, but the concept of eliminating a service without reducing the corresponding impact (footprint) on the environment seems to not make sense. Why eliminate the Sports Shop in the Village if the building and its impact to the river corridor remains? What has been accomplished by taking out the pool at the Lodge (seems like more people in the pool equals less tearing up the river banks). What will be done with that area once the pool is filled in? One could argue that the Mountain Room Lounge does nothing to protect and enhance river values, and yet it is not on the hit list (for the record, I am not advocating eliminating the bar). I guess my point is these lists seem a bit arbitrary. I understand that to some degree they are the result of the Court Order, but perhaps they need to be revisited.

Thanks again for the opportunity to comment on this most important issue. I look forward to future discussions.

Sincerely

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 339 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern, Today I became aware that the Yosemite Merced River Plan includes the possible removal of the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp with a similar impact to Glen Aulin HSC along the Tuolomne River. I am writing to share my concern that the removal of High Sierra Camps would severely impair many visitors' ability to experience a deeper relationship with the vastness and diversity of Yosemite beyond the valley floor and the roadside camping areas in Tuolomne Meadows. I am an avid hiker and have hiked the circuit of HSCs all the while ensconced in the beauty of its surroundings. Now that I am in my late 60's, it is difficult to backpack long distances, so HSCs offer a solution. Although I support the effort to preserve the natural resources of the park, it is also important to me that the park offers a diversity of ways to optimize opportunities to educate as visitors recreate. The High Sierra Camps programs have been immensely instrumental in this endeavor. My vote is to save the Merced Lake HSC as well as Glen Aulin.

Correspondence ID: 340 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: DELETE

Correspondence ID: 341 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I recently learned that there are plans under consideration for the Merced River that may involve reducing or eliminating the Merced High Sierra Camp. I did the High Sierra Loop Hike in 2007 and found this camp to be one of the highlights. I also understand that Stephen Mather founded this camp in 1916 which should make it equivalent to a National Historic Site. I hope the final plan will leave it undisturbed.

Thank you for your consideration,

Correspondence ID: 342 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I understand there is a proposal to close the Merced Lake and Glen Aulin High Sierra camps. I would strongly urge you to keep these open. My husband and I recently (2010) discovered the opportunity to explore Yosemite through this avenue. As soon as we discovered it, my husband applied to partake in a ranger-led hiking trip. We were too late in 2010, but fortunately made it in

2011. Not being a person who hikes a lot, I was surprised at what the hiking trip was like. James McGrew was our ranger lead, and he made the trip very interesting and provided a lot of information we never would have known, as well as understanding that I was very limited in my experience and allowing me to hike at my own pace. The staff at all the camps were caring, helpful, and provided more educational information while hosting us. Unfortunately, our trip did not include Glen Aulin and May Lake High Sierra camps, and we are hoping to repeating our trip with the inclusion of these two camps, provided they remain open. When we talk to individuals and show them our photos, they are amazed to learn that they have that opportunity. It would be a shame to tell them that they are too late due to bureaucratic decisions. Most of these people are of our age group (over 50), and the opportunity for the High Sierra housekeeping camps make it more likely that they would go, otherwise they would not be up to participating having to use a carry a full-pack (tents, bedding, food). Please consider keeping these camps open. They are a very important resource for learning, exploring, and having the most wonderful natural experiences one can participate in via the campsites.

Correspondence ID: 343 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Planners I was born and raised in San Francisco. I was fortunate as a child to visit Yosemite many times- but never experienced the High Sierra camps until later in my life Oddly, my parents never camped out ?but loved the Sierra's ? In fact , my Mom broke her leg skiing in Yosemite in 1950. My wife and I continue to visit Yosemite every year and enjoy it even more than my parents. Our back packing trips along the trials to the High Sierra camps ?including several trips with the Yosemite association introducing young people to the outdoors . I have taken several groups of young campers for visits to Yosemite ? and all enjoy the High Sierra camps. By far the best experience for many visitors is the long established High Sierra Summer camps. We urge you to continue their important existence for visitors ? who are unable to carry a heavy back packs. These Summer camps provide a special aspect to Yosemite to experience the high Sierra beauty ? which we believe is so special and important To maintain . Please keep all of camps open and allow visitors more wonderful memories. Walking and talking with Rangers and others ? it is very special asset for thousands of visitors. . Respectfully yours,

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Correspondence ID: 344 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: It has come to my attention that proposals are being considered that would result in closing Yosemite's high camps. I was fortunate enough to participate in a tour of these camps in 2010. After forty years of visiting the valley, I believe that on this trip I received the deepest understanding of the park as a whole. The high camps' circuit is a tremendous opportunity for educating and exposing the public to the unique beauty and ecosystem of the park. I hope you will consider keeping them open.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 345 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,30,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: From the comment form:

1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives?

No - I believe the alternatives proposed are too simplistic and do not reflect an accurate portrayal of current use.

The first three alternatives are based on reduced numbers in an effort to promote "self-reliance" in visitors in Yosemite Valley. This reflects the values of a traditional Caucasian, affluent hiker or backpacker. With the growing population and demographic changes, these are no longer the values of the average visitor who is increasingly urban and multi-cultural. I don't believe it is possible to reset visitor use numbers, but it is paramount to look for creative ways to manage the numbers coming to Yosemite today.

Alternatives 4 and 5 address the current numbers of people, but use the status quo to deal with them which has already proved ineffective. You already have traffic warnings at the gates and people directing traffic flow, but all this does is change where the gridlock is, not prevent it. The MRP workbook states that "visitor use levels are relatively high during the peak summer season". This is a massive understatement. There is traffic gridlock on the Valley Floor for most of the day every day between Memorial Day and Labor Day. This gridlock makes the valley a parking lot and visitors are not given appropriate information or alternatives before they are stuck in traffic, ruining everyone's experience in Yosemite Valley by the traffic jams.

To me it is not necessary to reduce the number of people, but you must give them a better way to visit the valley and reduce the number of cars in the valley drastically. The day use permit system and reservation system are great ideas and well worth experimentation, but alternatives 1 and 2 only have this system paired with reduced bussing options which doesn't make sense. There needs to be comprehensive bussing plan. YARTS is a good start, but routes needs to be increased in frequency and expanded to more local areas such as Oakdale and Fresno. If we could reduce the number of cars while improving public transportation system, you would not deny people the experience of being in Yosemite, but would protect them from being stuck

in traffic. The current number of cars is the problem, not the number of people.

Parking in satellite areas is mentioned, which would be fantastic, but only if paired with better public transportation and greatly increased visitor information - not just more billboards, but actual visitor centers to help people plan. Better visitor information centers need to be provided near the park entrances and more encouragement should be given to visitors to experience areas/activities outside of the east end of Yosemite Valley where most of the congestion occurs. Educate visitors, provide better transportation, and offer more activities in the high country, Glacier Point and the Big Trees, and hikes/rides in the west end of the Valley. Right now the overwhelming congestion is from Swinging Bridge to Half Dome. I think the average visitor isn't well-oriented and thinks of Yosemite mainly as waterfalls and Half Dome. The best source of information on Yosemite is the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center, which is buried in the heart of the congestion. Interpretation is one of the greatest strengths of NPS, yet visitors have to fight congestion for access to information. The Visitor Centers in Tuolumne and Wawona are small and not very accessible or promoted. Highways 140 and 120 entrances offer little to no visitor information and are two of the most popular routes to Yosemite. El Portal could be an excellent site for a main visitor center. If visitors could be educated when entering the park through increased visitor centers in conjunction with satellite parking areas near the entrance gates, it would keep everyone from being funneled straight into the west end of Yosemite Valley.

One other concern regarding the proposed range of alternatives is the workbook on page 4 selectively lists ORVs to support the river designations rather than highlighting the actual ORVs as they occur along the river. The only cultural ORVs recognized are Native American and U.S. Cavalry. No mention is made of historically significant buildings relating to innkeeping and hospitality, but the history of concessions within Yosemite has always been intertwinded with the history of NPS and the creation of Yosemite National Park. NPS owes its existence in part to the original innkeepers in Yosemite who promoted this area and brought national attention to the need to protect special areas. Historic sites such as The Ahwahnee and the High Sierra Camps were built by concessioners at the request of NPS. Why are designated historic sites such as the Wawona Hotel, Merced Lake HSC, The Ahwahnee and the Yosemite Valley garage not given Cultural ORV status in the workbook despite their location along forks of the Merced River?

Also, the omission of any Cultural ORVs in river segment 1 on page 4 suggests a bias on the part of NPS. Merced Lake has recognized Native American archeological sites as well as structures & trails made by the US Calvary. As the oldest high camp it also reflects an important period in Yosemite's history. All three of these archeological and historical values are noted in other river segments, but are left off river segment 1. Why? Is it only because Merced Lake HSC was built along a portion of the river that seven decades later would be designated "wild"? The workbook should give an accurate portrayal of current use with reasonable proposed alternatives, but instead it gives the impression that a bureaucratic designation supersedes any chance of recognizing the current value and traditions represented by Merced Lake. The workbook should recognize all ORVs regardless of where they occur.

2. Do the alternatives address the states goals for this plan?

Not completely, see above.

3-5. Feedback on Alternatives Concepts 1-3

Do not remove commercial rafting, bikes or stables:

Please limit the congestion in Yosemite Valley, but do not limit the experiences available to visitors such as rafting, biking and stable rides. There are ways such as fencing, reinforced trails or boardwalks to protect popular river banks and meadows without denying people access to these natural areas. Stable rides can be re-routed to avoid the most congested trails. Anything that gets people out of the cars - whether it's an increase in tours, rafting, interpretive hikes, or horseback riding is good. If you limit experiences you end up funneling people to the same activities in the same places wihich increases congestion and decreases the visitor's enjoyment of the park. Current activities can be managed in river friendly ways. Also I do not see the need for permits for private paddlers. Their impact is minimal if the access to river banks is well designated and controlled. The cost and hassle of a permit system would outweigh any benefit.

Regarding commercial stock use, it is not stated well why NPS would want to remove any of the stables and what the benefit would be. What's wrong with horses and mules? I'm very afraid of mules and horses so am not a rider, but I'd rather hike behind a mule train any day than a Boy Scout group. Mules and horses are important to the history of the park as well as its current maintenance. They are a great way to get visitors out of their cars and introduce them to the beauty of Yosemite. Mules/horses are more ecological than people - commercial stock poop has been quarantined against non-native species, mules don't littler, they eat where they stand, and they stay on established trails and in their corrals. I think they have the same basic understanding of Leave No Trace principles as most Yosemite hikers along the Merced River corridor. Just like mules, people relieve themselves whereever they feel like including along trails and riverbanks, but they leave toilet paper and litter all over. They cut multiple use trails along meadows and rivers to avoid getting their feet wet or to see as much as they can see. People can only carry minimal loads, but create more impact on the land by their individual tent spaces and cooking areas, often creating fire rings. Mules and horses are a perfect way to travel and carry supplies in the Sierras and are much less destructive than their backpacking/hiking neighbors. In my opinion, it is unfortunate that you meet a lot more people than mules along the Merced River corridor. At least if people are traveling by stock, most likely they will be with a guide who will educate them on the importance of wilderness ethics.

Do not remove any overnight accommodations:

It is irresponsible to decrease the number of overnight accommodations available to visitors whether it is lodging or camping. The number of available beds/campsites in Yosemite does not equal pre-1997 flood numbers and there is already too high of a demand in the peak season months. It is almost impossible to score a campground reservation anymore which led to the problem of on-line scalping of campsites for astronomical prices. Lodging is becoming too overpriced for families, but people are desperate to pay any price for the privilege of staying in Yosemite Valley. The combination of high demand and overpricing makes it difficult for the average citizen to stay in the park. Removal of any units of Housekeeping Camp would take away the most affordable lodging option. Already, the lack of overnight availability increases the day-use demands, which increases the traffic congestion affecting the park. A further decrease in overnight lodging would just make the congestion worse and unnecessarily deny people access to their park.

Removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp would destroy the High Camp loop trip and take away a unique and cherished experience, one which began because NPS wanted to provide interpretive guest services in the backcountry. The original mission still stands and the high camps provide a wonderful base for appreciation of Yosemite's high country. Every effort is made to manage these camps in way that is appropriate for their wilderness setting and to explore ways to lessen the camp's ecological footprint. The workbook does not state what, if any, benefit would result from removal of the high camp. As noted in question 1, it instead ignores the history and wonderful experiences offered by Merced Lake. The camp's footprint was established by the US Calvary and the camp itself is a peaceful and scenic oasis in the wilderness. It complements the wilderness, it does not damage it. Generations have enjoyed the camp and should be able to in the future. The average guest of Merced Lake High Camp is someone who has spent a lifetime loving Yosemite and needs the guest services to continue their enjoyment of the backcountry. The Yosemite backcountry is huge and wild, with the High Sierra Camps being small blips on a map compared to the wilderness opportunities throughout the park. For the unique enjoyment Merced Lake High Camp provides with minimal impact, it should not be targeted for removal.

Do not remove the Yosemite Valley garage or concessions headquarters building:

Byond the unnecessary cost associated with building new facilities, removal of these buildings would not accomplish the stated goals of the workbook. The written purpose for removing these buildings is to avoid commutes, but removing the garage and headquarters would cause more people/vehicles to commute. The majority of those who work in the DNC headquarters live in management and executive housing wich is not slated for removal in any of the alternative concepts. Moving their jobs to El Portal would create an unnecessary commute for most everyone who works in this building. It would also take away the ability of the concessioner to respond quickly to situations in Yosemite wuch as weather events, power outages and rockfalls. Moving the garage is also illogical. You would have to move the fleet of busses, trucks and trams maintained and repaired by the garage as well. Then every bus, tram, and truck that services the valley and Yosemite in general would have to commute from El Portal. This would be a drain on natural resources and air quality and increase congestion. Also removal of the garage would deny visitors access to emergency repairs and assistance. Lastly, the garage is a desinated historic structure. As a former carriage-house dating back to stagecoach days, it is a living piece of Yosemite Valley history that should not be removed.

Do not remove bridges:

Perhaps you could change the river channels around the bridges or do small changes to the bridge footings, if a minimal cost. But the river has existed fine for decades with these bridges in place. Please do not waste millions of tax-payer dollars to remove bridges when the money is needed so desperately elsewhere in the national park system. It would be an offensive example of bureaucratic waste.

6-7. Feedback on Alternative Concept 4-5

I do not believe overnight lodging should be increased or decreased, but it should be left as is (though the current pricing system should be revised to make more in-line with average family budgets, rather than comparing lodging services to other equally high-priced hotels).

I fully support increasing the number of campsites in Yosemite Valley. This is an important and traditional way to enjoy Yosemite Valley and should be managed in a way that supports the health of the river. If campsites are removed from river banks, they should be relocated to other areas, hopefully on the est end of Yosemite Valley to spread visitor use. I would ask that campfires be prohibited. I know that an evening fire is the popular image of camping, but the smoke is overwhelming and damages the air quality of not the lungs of people in marginal health.

I love the suggestion of a day use area in what used to be the lower river campground. Day use areas have been neglected in park planning while the number of day use visitors has increased dramatically since the flood. All day use areas should be improved to avoid dust and congestion and have better facilities. More day use picnic areas are needed for families to travel economically and enjoy the park. Using the old campgrounds which have not been restored properly from the flood would improve the damaged areas and help with congestion in the park.

8. Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Please refer to my comments at the top regarding the need for better overall public transportation in conjunction with day-use

permits and a reservations system.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on thse alternatives. I'm very happy that change can move forward in Yosemite Valley, but hope it will be in a way that does not deny people access to their park or take away unique ways to experience Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 346 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: American Whitewater Recreational Groups
Received: Apr,24,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: River Management Challenges (page 27 of the workbook)

Ecological and Natural Resource Values

Question: How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function? - Discontinue removing large woody debris from the river in high use areas. Move it only to the extent necessary to allow for recreational passage and preservation of infrastructure.

Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values

Question: How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? - If parking is expanded, it should include areas for boaters to park their vehicles at river access areas.

Question: Would you support bus service along new routes in the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? - Bus service should provide enough room for kayaks, canoes and rafts to be transported.

Question: If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? - Yes. See our comment letter for more information.

Question: Would you support the use of a day use parking/vehicle permit? Does this mean 1) Would you use a day use parking/vehicle permit? OR 2) Would you support a day use parking/vehicle permit system? - Yes, and we suggest that any permit issued for floating the river also include parking.

Question: What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? - Boating down the river in a kayak, canoe or raft is an appropriate use of the entire river corridor. Lift the ban, build river access in high use areas, and consider permitted use if need be on reaches that exceed user capacity.

Land Uses and Associated Developments

Question: How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? - Allow overnight camping in selected areas on the river corridor, requiring Leave No Trace practices and zero additional infrastructure.

Segment 1: Merced River Above Nevada Falls

Paddling should be allowed on the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River. Allowing paddling here may improve issue #1 (high encounter rates on Wilderness trails). Some people will be experiencing part of the Merced Wild and Scenic Corridor from the river, reducing the number of people on the trail at any given time. Further, if boaters are allowed to camp in primitive sites along the river using Leave No Trace principles campground use levels may also decline over all. This practice is commonly used on other Wild and Scenic Rivers throughout the country. Paddlers would be subject to the same backcountry permitting requirements as hikers/backpackers. Paddling is a wilderness compliant activity, and opening the river to paddling in this segment and throughout the rest of the Wilderness Area will bring it into compliance with the Wilderness Act.

Segment 2: Yosemite Valley

Regarding issue #18 (Paddling and Floating in Yosemite Valley): We support opening the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River to paddling year-around. However, we support having a permit system on high-use stretches of the river for both private and commercial activity. It should be noted, however, that a variety of factors, including the season, hydrology and weather will limit use in these areas by default. Additionally, in these high use areas, river access points should be built at appropriate locations to prevent erosion and trampling of vegetation. Please see our comment letter for more.

We support a combined version of alternatives 6A and 6B. Large woody debris does not need to be removed to ensure safety on high use reaches of the river. Instead it can be moved in a way that keeps the integrity of the ecological function of the river intact. Movement of LWD in this manner would only be necessary when movement does not accomplish these goals. We do not support using cables around logs in rivers, as it poses an extreme safety hazard. Additionally, we always think that educating

visitors about river use is important, regardless of the situation. Boating should be open on the entire length of the river throughout the year. Closures because of LWD, the season or any other reason is unnecessary. The Park can recommend that boaters stay off the river, and flows will likely create seasonal restrictions to paddling conditions on their own, but paddling should not be prohibited.

Regarding Issue #7: Allow primitive overnight camping in selected areas on the river corridor, requiring Leave No Trace practices and zero additional infrastructure. These locations should be designated below the mean high water mark to ensure minimal impact. On other Wild and Scenic Rivers throughout the country, this style of camping is encouraged.

We support alternative 22A, which provides river access at West of Pohono Bridge. This is currently the location with the best river access and provides for the most complete run on the Merced through Yosemite Valley.

Segment 4: El Portal

Boating should be allowed on all stretches of the Wild and Scenic Merced River.

Segments 5, 6, 7 and 8: South Fork Merced River Wawona

Paddling on the South Merced below Wawona is currently allowed. In our view, this provides an excellent model of how paddling can be managed throughout the park. Paddling is open, there is no management of LWD, there is no specific infrastructure needed for paddlers, and there is no indication that additional management is necessary. This is one of the most popular Class V boating opportunities in the region, and things are working well. As a result, we support management option 31A.

Putting the Pieces Together (page 29 of the workbook)

Ecological and Resource Values:

Removing large woody debris from rivers is not necessary for boating safety and is excessive management. Instead, LWD can be moved in high use stretches only, and be moved in a way that keeps the integrity of the ecological function of the river intact. Movement of LWD in this manner is only necessary to allow for recreational passage and protection of infrastructure in certain cases on high use reaches. Removal is only necessary in limited cases when movement does not accomplish these goals.

Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values:

Allow paddling on the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River all year long. Resource values should be protected, and where there is high visitor use, it should be managed accordingly.

Correspondence ID: 347 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,05,2012 00:19:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: Removal of the Wawona golf course is not indicated by any of the ORV's. Obviously this extreme alternative concept is designed to primarily please citizens who would like much lower levels of use - by everyone except themselves!

Topic Question 3: Removal of the Wawona golf course is not indicated by any of the ORV's. The golf course does not seem to have any negative impact on the Merced River.

I can understand why you chose the removal option in your "extreme" Alternative 1 - because you have to present the extremes. But removal of the golf course should not be considered in any of the other alternatives.

Comments: Parking at the Wawona Store: I think buses should be moved back to the west side of Hwy 41. Even if significant vehicles are re-routed to a proposed new Mariposa Grove parking lot, I fear the Wawona Store lot will still be too too crowded and busy.

Correspondence ID: 348 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,05,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Yes except the removal of the golf course.

Topic Question 2: I do not agree that the golf course should be removed. Why was this included in the report?

Topic Question 3: I do not agree that the golf course should be removed. Why was this included in the report?

Topic Question 7: Alternatives 3-5 Do not remove the golf course.

Topic Question 8: Bus parking in the Wawona Store parking lot. These buses will take up too much room, making it difficult for traffic flow and visitor parking.

Comments: Please do not remove the golf course. It has been a Wawona landmark since 1918.

Correspondence ID: 349 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: self Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,05,2012 12:02:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I am sure the golf coarse does not loose money for the YNP area. The semi marsh area runoff is into a creek and drys out in the summer. The grey water placed on the flat golf areas helps keep the animals and tres watered in the summer. the attraction of a golf coarse in YNP helps the local players and torrests that dont see golf in there home towns.

Topic Question 2: The golf coarse hs been used by all persons near and far for 50 years.. it is a stable of the wawona area and should stay. parking is a problem in wawona hotel and store area. The busses to the trees is a good concept. but move it to the north side of the bridge where there is a flat area, not at the store. expanding the parking at the south entrace is a good place to add day time parking.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 350 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,05,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: The Wawona Golf Course, built in 1918 and predating the construction of the Ahwahnee in 1927, became a part of Yosemite history when it was purchased along with the Wawona Hotel and Wawona Basin in 1932. Although a very small piece of the course comes to the edge of the Merced River, the river is free to move as it desires without any constraints placed on it. The course is a prime attraction in Wawona, it's beauty to be explored and admired, not just by golfers but also walkers and horseback riders who are able to experience this historical piece of Yosemite. The course can be accessed by young and old, abled and disabled, and should NOT be removed.

Topic Question 3: The Wawona Golf Course, built in 1918 and predating the construction of the Ahwahnee in 1927, became a part of Yosemite history when it was purchased along with the Wawona Hotel and Wawona Basin in 1932. Although a very small piece of the course comes to the edge of the Merced River, the river is free to move as it desires without any constraints placed on it. The course is a prime attraction in Wawona, it's beauty to be explored and admired, not just by golfers but also walkers and horseback riders who are able to experience this historical piece of Yosemite. The course can be accessed by young and old, abled and disabled, and should NOT be removed.

Comments: Don't destroy the access visitors have to the park! It is meant to be be used by all, not just the abled bodied. It is a sight to behold that should be protected yes, but not sheltered away from the public.

Correspondence ID: 351 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: For the record, I support legal kayaking and canoeing in Yosemite.

Years ago I floated the Merced in the valley down to Pohono bridge in a canoe. I'd like to do it again. I would also like(for those people talented enough) for the steep sections of the Tuolomne, Merced, and Yosemite Creek to be legal, just as the So. Fork of the Merced is.

Thank you for hearing my opinion.

Correspondence ID: 352 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Planners- I understand you are in the process of deciding about changes and what to do with The Merced High Camp Facility which was the halfway mark for the Sierra High Camps Loop trip I took last summer. This was probably one of the most important and memorable trips I have ever taken. I was lucky enough to be included in a group of 8 women, in their 60's, most of them I did not know. Being that far in to the wilderness without cell phones, media, etc and seeing so much natural beauty was the best thing In the world for all of us. The Merced Camp was a two night stop over which we needed - not only to rest our sore feet- but to enjoy the incredible beauty of that site. We looked at the stars, listened to the water and did many things

there that did not impact the river - other than putting our tired feet in to cool off! If water quality is the issue certainly rules could be made that would be followed by the nature lovers who frequent these camps with stiff monetary penalties for those who don't comply with the rules! Our group would not have been able to go on this memorable trip if we had to sleep on the ground and bring our own food. When you look at the diversity of the people hiking those trails and staying in the high camps you see an age range from 6 to 80. There are people from all over the world learning about each other, nature and going back to their countries with a knowledge of Americans who don't spend their time watching reality tv and vacationing in Las Vegas!!! Sounds corny, but this is good for world peace!!!! Please do what you need to do to protect this wild and scenic river but please don't eliminate any of the camps. We will happily follow strict rules and pay a little more for improvements to protect the water for the privilege of experiencing nature in the Yosemite backcountry. For me, this magical experience was a necessary respite from our fast paced and often disturbing world. I returned home wanting to learn more about John Muir and the history of the park... And hoping to my children and others could experience what I had. Thank you for your consideration

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Correspondence ID: 353 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Sir or Madam: I understand that consideration is being given to closing some or all of the world-famous High Sierra Camps. This is a terrible idea and I urge you to reject this plan and continue to operate the very special sanctuaries that these camps represent. A few years ago I had the good fortune to "win the lottery" and take my group on a five-day guided hike led by NPS Ranger James McGrew. We were all overwhelmed by the opportunity to visit Vogelsang, Merced, and Sunrise under the leadership of a very, very skilled Ranger. I will attach a letter I wrote to then Superintendent Mike Tollefson about our wonderful experience. I am a Vietnam Veteran who had just recovered from surgery for prostate cancer caused by exposure to Agent Orange and would never have been able to visit the high country without an opportunity to stay at the High Sierra Camps. Please do all that you can to protect these national treasures. Thank you. Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 354 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: American Alpine Club Recreational Groups
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Yosemite Planners: I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Merced River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts as a representative of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA), The American Alpine Club (AAC), the California Recreational Resource Advisory Committee (CARRAC), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

As a member of the AAC for 24 years, I have served as Vice President, a member of the Board of Directors, and lead its Yosemite Committee. I also serve as President of the Mountain Protection Commission (MPC) of the UIAA based in Switzerland, representing millions of climbers and mountaineers worldwide, many of whom have climbed or aspire to climb in Yosemite Valley. As member of the CARRAC, I represent summer non-motorized recreation, including climbing and mountaineering. I also serve as a Deputy Vice-Chairman of Mountains and Connectivity Conservation for the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of the IUCN.

I think the alternatives presented in the Merced River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook clearly define and address the stated goals for this huge and important plan. I congratulate the NPS for presenting five credible examples (concepts) of how we might strike a reasonable balance between the complex needs of Yosemite (restoration) with the needs and increasing impacts of people living in and visiting Yosemite (visitor experiences).

Feedback on Alternative Concepts 1 and 2 Although these alternatives would achieve extensive restoration in the floodplain, I believe it would unnecessarily reduce the number of campsites. My constituency is strongly in favor of rustic campsites (walk-in and walk-to sites), which could be justifiably included within the 100-year floodplain with minimal impacts. Also, day-use permit restrictions will tend to unjustly penalize a large portion of my constituency. Mountaineers and climbers typically completely avoid the heavily-visited and congested parts of the eastern Valley area. They rarely contribute to gridlock, crowding, and other problems manifested at high-visitation days. The day-use permit system would also tend to negatively impact my constituency as climbers spontaneously arriving at Yosemite from other countries (or other parts of the US) might not know that they need a day-use reservation to enter the Valley, might not know how to get a reservation, or have access to technologies to obtain a permit (computer access). Reducing the number of day-use parking sites would also tend to limit access to some very popular climbing areas in the vicinity of the Camp 6/Yosemite Village area and Camp Curry.

Feedback on Alternative Concept 3 In my opinion, Concept 3 offers the best balance of restoration and visitor experience. The proposed expansion of the number of campsites would be very valuable (especially 40 new campsites west of Yosemite Lodge), and I support the restoration of the heavily impacted campsites in parts of North Pines and Lower Pines Campgrounds.

I suggest that if riverfront campsites at Backpackers Campground are removed for restoration, then replacement sites should be created close to the paved footpath/bike path on a slight expansion of the campground boundary on its western side (which is also on slightly higher ground). Because this area is slightly rocky, it could be designated for campers without tents.

The Backpackers Campground is an extremely valuable and important resource for those who choose to explore areas of the park far beyond the Valley floor. This spreading out of visitor use is vital to enhancing the visitor experience and reducing impacts in Yosemite Valley, so should be supported by a convenient staging area, which the Backpackers Campground provides. Dispersing visitor use also achieves a key element of the MRP: providing access and protecting resources. It should be noted that the Backpackers Campground serves another highly valuable role which I strongly support: It is often used as a

temporary or seasonal "base camp" for visiting scientists and other researchers doing valuable projects in Yosemite Valley and along the Merced River watershed.

The use of real-time monitoring of traffic flows and diversions during peak periods, differential parking fees and congestion pricing in this alternative would mainly have little effect on my constituency, who would tend to arrive at and depart from the park during early mornings or evenings. Such schemes however, would tend to smooth out traffic flows during the peak visitation days, which would be appreciated by all visitors.

Are there other reasonable alternatives or ideas that should be considered? In order to dramatically reduce air pollution in Yosemite Valley, especially during cool temperatures during nights and mornings, I suggest that the NPS designate certain sections of all Valley campgrounds, perhaps the new additions planned in these alternatives as "smokeless campsites" with no fire rings. These sections could be selected and enjoyed by families with children and those with medical issues, allergies, or aversions to being exposed for many hours to campfire smoke. This would greatly enhance the visitor experience for many people and would benefit the park and its natural species by reducing smoke particulates and the generation/disposal of hazardous campfire ash in the park.

Further Comments An important historical and cultural component of the Outstanding and Remarkable Values (ORVs) of climbing in the Merced River corridor is Camp 4, the world-famous "base camp" in Yosemite Valley, where generations of climbers, those who aspire to be climbers, those who have a fascination with the spirit of climbing, and those without a campsite reservation have been able to come together in a uniquely inclusive, friendly, rustic, and collaborative way. As the sport of climbing grew in the 20th century, Camp 4's free-wheeling, collaborative culture and its special setting near the river and the cliffs enabled it to serve as, and become world famous as, "The Laboratory" within The Granite Crucible. Here climbing equipment and techniques are quickly created, tested, modified, and shared with others.

Here also is where most of the innovations in modern search and rescue techniques, safety equipment, clothing, and safer climbing and rappelling methods were developed over the decades. These "Yosemite style" innovations are now used worldwide not only for climbing and mountaineering, but also for water crossings, hazardous rappelling descents and swift-water rescues in water-related sports such as kayaking, canyoneering, river rafting, and spelunking. They are also used by the renowned Yosemite Search and Rescue team (assisted when needed by a reserve corps of Yosemite climbers) to keep the park's 3.5 million annual visitors safe each year. The significance of Camp 4 as part of the historical, cultural, and recreational ORVs of climbing in the Merced River corridor has also been clearly affirmed by the National Park Service (NPS). In February 2003, Camp 4 was designated as a National Historic Place by the Department of the Interior.

Former NPS Pacific West Region Director John Reynolds pointed out in the award-winning documentary on the history of climbing in Yosemite, "Vertical Frontier" the special cultural and historical significance of Camp 4: "The world came together and said 'There are three important places in the world in the history of climbing. They are the base camp at Mount Everest, the base camp at Chamonix (Mont Blanc), and Camp 4.' Suddenly, the whole evolution about my thought of what Camp 4 was just took a huge growth, or flip-flop?to recognize that in fact we had something of at least national significance and maybe international significance right there in Yosemite Valley.

This broadened by view of what history can be. It made me think of how those big walls relate to the whole stretch of American history, and that little campground down there. And the kind of people who make history are not necessarily just the Thomas Jeffersons and General Grants of the world. It might just be the kids who are coming out there and are passionate about expanding themselves in a place like Yosemite."

Climbing is a unique historic, cultural, and recreational ORV of the Merced River corridor of Yosemite Valley. Therefore, special care must always be taken by park planners to avoid any potential negative impacts or restrictions on access to climbing areas and staging areas (used for preparation before and after climbs) during and after development of a user capacity framework for the Merced River Plan. Also, it is important to remember that Yosemite is not just a national park. It is also a World Heritage Site, and so in a sense belongs to all mankind as a special place on Earth. This means it should be managed and accessible in such a way so that it can be enjoyed universally by people from around the world, not just those who live in the US, California, or the nearby Yosemite region. The international climbing community and other international visitors have always cherished Yosemite as a special place on Earth, and they expect and appreciate continued easy spontaneous access to visit for the day or find opportunities to camp in the park, especially during the spring, summer, and fall.

CONCLUSION

On behalf of the groups I represent, I would like to express appreciation for the significant time and effort you and your planning staff have spent to develop and inform the public about the Merced River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts and to solicit our comments. I look forward to actively participating in this process as it moves forward.

Best regards,

[redacted], MBA _____

The American Alpine Club Past Vice-President President, The Yosemite Committee

International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation President, Mountain Protection Commission

IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature WCPA - World Commission on Protected Areas Mountains and Connectivity Conservation Deputy Vice-Chairman, Communications

California Recreational Resource Advisory Committee Representative, Summer Non-Motorized Recreation

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Correspondence ID: 355 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Couldn't find the comment form. Please don't close the Merced High Sierra camp. The camps have always been a highlight of my trips into Yosemite. Thank you

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Correspondence ID: 356 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Sirs, This note is to express our opinion that it would be a mistake to eliminate the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp in Yosemite National Park. While only open a bit more than two months a year, the High Sierra Camps provide a unique visitor experience in a fantastically beautiful, natural setting that is not duplicated anywhere else in the nation. In what other park can you hike in the back country approximately seven to nine miles per day between five different camps and find a communal setting at the end of each day with great meals, interesting campfire talks by very knowledgeable interpreters, and a comfortable bed to sleep in at night so that you do not have to carry a large backpack? The Merced Lake High Sierra camp is an integral part of that system. In fact, it is a key part of the loop because it is at a somewhat lower altitude than the other camps so that, on loop trips, hikers typically spend two nights there. The availability of these camps is as much a part of the possible Yosemite experience as the Bracebridge dinners at the Ahwahnee Hotel. We have taken part in loop trips and visited one or more High Sierra Camps, often with our children, five or six times. Over the years, it has become increasingly difficult to obtain a reservation at any of the camps due to their popularity. To close any of the camps would deprive visitors of a special experience that fulfills the Park Service's mission to make the parks available for the public's enjoyment as well as preservation. Closing the Merced Lake Camp, with its proximity to Mt. Clark and Washburn and other beautiful alpine lakes, would be a huge mistake! We are long time members of the Yosemite Association and Conservancy. Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 357 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I will review the draft plans closely, as I am a long time fan of Yosemtie, since the 1970's. I did want to mention that I understand part of the plan might include the closure of Lake Merced High Sierra Camp. I really enjoyed hiking to that aea and staying there. I am a long time hiker but now in my 60's with arthritis, having the camp to stay at allows me to keep on going.

I think could be true for many. Also the camp is part of the historic fabric of the park as well as serving a current purpose. I could appreciate the idea of closing the camps to protect the area from over use, but would prefer to see other means to reduce the quantity of visitors than closing the camp entirely.

Correspondence ID: 358 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am from the east coast and traveled to California and Yosemite for the first time last summer. I took the 5-day tour with my dad in the high sierra camps. Beyond the amazing experience I had with your staff and in your beautiful country, I couldn't help but take those 5 days home with me. It's so clear that a beautiful place so much removed from cell phones and the stress of our modern world is a necessity. The high camps are so important. They are so neat - amazing people, an amount of stars I have never seen before (I could actually see hints of another galaxy - one that I learned will collide with ours just as the sun goes out - I must have told 30 people in my office of my belief for mankind as we have such amazing timing and can simply jump to the Andromeda). This place is important to allow us to remember what came before us, if we don't explore it in the most eco-friendly way, we lose a lot about ourselves and the world.

Correspondence ID: 359 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: The High Sierra Camps provide a unique, intimate and individualistic approach to learning and wanting to participate in saving our parks. As nature lovers and taxpayers, we believe in the preservation of our parks, but not exclusion. We have introduced many of our friends to the concept of how important our parks are by sharing the HSC experience with them. Please do not close any of the High Sierra Camps. We have read that you are planning on closing Merced High Sierra Camp as a precedent to closing other HSC. We have been fortunate to hike to all of the High Sierra Camps which has given us the opportunity to know and fully appreciate Yosemite National Park. We have participated in 5 High Sierra Camp loop hikes guided by the wonderful ranger naturalists and numerous hikes on our own to the camps. Without the camps, the enthusiastic workers at the camps and the infectious inspiration and knowledge of the Park Rangers on the guided hikes and at the camp fire talks, we would never

have appreciated the history, preservation of land and wildlife as we should. We received and learned information every step of the way to the camps. You cannot imitate the camaraderie you experience at the High Sierra Camps and the lasting impression that the National Parks are worth every penny we spend as taxpayers and users in the endeavor of preservation and enjoyment of our lands.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 360 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hello I was fortunate to spend a week in Yosemite while doing the 7 day trip. I learned so much on this trip and hope to someday return with the younger generation in my family so that they too can learn and enjoy the park as I did. Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 361 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: The Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook was a vast improvement over the recent Planning Workbook. It is evident that the planning staff worked very hard to make it a well organized and easy to read document. The Webinar that I participated in was very helpful and clarified aspects of the workbook that I was not sure about. I would like to thank Doyle and May in the Planning Office for taking the time to respond to my questions and comments. Thank you all again for your time and efforts.

For several reasons, I have to reject Concepts 1 and 5 totally. However, I have found that there are aspects of Concepts 2, 3 and 4 which could be combined to make a possible alternative. Instead of picking a specific alternative, as was suggested at the end of the Webinar, I will write about what aspects that I agree or disagree with and any ideas I have.

Concept 5 is at the worst end of the spectrum and would do little to protect the Merced River Corridor. While Concepts 1 and 2 offer the highest level of protection, they are the two that contain a Day Use Permit and the most major changes to the park. I feel that implementing a Day Use Permit should not be considered until after other options are explored.

The User Capacity and visitation amounts are based on numbers and concepts that I am not clear on how they were derived which makes it difficult to come up with a number for visitor use and capacity management. It could be said that almost every thing could be considered related to User Capacity but there are several actions that have been related to User Capacity which I feel are not directly relevant. For example, removal of Sugar Pine Bridge in earlier alternatives was directly linked to User Capacity and would be more appropriately discussed in the restoration section. Basing the User Capacity on the amount of parking spaces is not a clear indicator of the impacts to the park's natural resources. There is also a lack of information how a day use permit, differential fee for parking and congestion parking pricing schemes would be implemented.

Since there is such an emphasis on actual numbers in the alternatives, I would like more information on how they were derived before considering a User Capacity. Even after looking at the NPS Public Use Statistics Office and the Visitor Use and Impact Monitoring Program websites, I am still unclear about the methodology that was used to come up with such specific numbers. I hope that in the DEIS there will be a clarification of data and the science behind these numbers.

According to the NPS website, visitation in the park hit it's peak in 1996 at 4,190,557. In 1994, 1995 and 1996 visitation was higher than in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Even with higher visitation, the impact of visitors on the park was not as evident as it is currently. We have to consider other possible reasons why the impact is more now.

Before the flood, there were approximately 1525 lodging units and 834 campsites. How has the reduction in overnight accommodations contribute to crowding and traffic issues? Is the continuing decrease of parking spaces in the valley, both in lots and roadside, contributing to crowding and traffic jams? Has the way we use the park changed? Is there too much redundancy in facilities and services?

Before a day use permit system is considered, reasons for the crowding should be further examined and other options for managing crowds, visitor usage and actions to protect and enhance river values should be considered.

REMOVING, RELOCATING AND COMBINING FACILITIES AND SERVICES.

Housing for non essential employees should be relocated outside of the valley. Housing for essential employees should be consolidated when possible by removing single cabins (ex. Lost Arrow, Boy's Town) and building multi level structures.

Reduce the amount of retail space by combining stores in the same location or by function. Habitat Yosemite could be moved to the Village store. The Nature Shop absorbed by the Yosemite Lodge at the Falls Gift shop. The Yosemite Village Sports Shop moved to the Mountain Shop and so on.

The ability to rent bikes in Yosemite is important for many visitors, but it is not necessary to have more than one location to do

that. Totally removing bike rentals would impact how some visitors experience the park and would also remove a method of transportation in the valley.

Offices, housekeeping and maintenance facilities should be moved from the valley when possible. One office that I feel that should remain in the valley is the Volunteer Office. Moving the office out of the valley could decrease the amount of spontaneous volunteering such as deciding to help pick up trash or join an organized volunteer opportunity at the last minute.

There has been mention of removing the Yosemite Lodge and Ahwahnee swimming pools but not the one in Curry. I find the Ahwahnee swimming pool is a distraction to the architecture of the Ahwahnee and should be removed. Removing all of the swimming pools in the valley might increase incidences of drowning because more people will swim in the Merced. If a pool is to remain, it should be the one in Curry Village since it is less noticeable than the one at Yosemite Lodge. The area at Yosemite Lodge could be restore or used for other things.

I agree with the removal of the Ahwahnee tennis courts and former golf course and the restoration of those areas.

I have mixed feelings about the removal of the Curry ice rink because of it's history. Also, none of the alternatives addressed restoration of that area if it is removed.

LODGING AND CAMPING

I believe that the reduction of places to stay in the valley is one reason for the increase of traffic issues. Adding lodging rooms should only be considered if the new rooms would be in areas that are currently developed. Removal of the Yosemite Lodge swimming pool or employee housing could open up a space for more lodging. Another possibility is if employees are relocated out of the valley or consolidated in other areas, these current structures could be converted for visitor use.

Housekeeping units and camp sites located too close to the river should be removed and those areas restored. Camping sites should be considered for other areas such as the stable and parts of the former Upper and Lower River Campgrounds that are not located close to the river. No new campsites should be developed west of Yosemite Lodge but a small expansion of Camp 4 would be acceptable.

At this time, I am unable to decided on what the amounts of lodging and campsites should be.

TRAFFIC AND CROWD CONTROL

I find that the traffic issues have more impact on my visitor experience than crowds. I can always find someplace in Yosemite valley where I can get away from the crowds or will go to another part of the park. Before day use permits are considered, other options of managing crowding and traffic issues should be considered.

These options include the increase in public transportation from surrounding areas, expansion of the shuttle system in the west end of the valley to encourage use in that area, bike racks on shuttles especially on shuttles used to take people to and from satellite parking, real-time park traffic information, roundabouts at busy intersections, seasonal overflow parking lots in the valley and at El Portal and encouraging visitors to go to other areas of the park such as Mariposa Grove, Wawona, Hetch Hetchy, etc. when the valley is too crowded. Increase the use of traffic and parking management staff during peak visitation especially at the intersections at Camp 6, Sentinel Bridge (both ends) and Yosemite Lodge. I feel that closing Sentinel Bridge to traffic creates more traffic jams by forcing people who want to leave the park to continue all the way down to Stoneman Bridge to exit the park.

Location of extra parking should be carefully considered. Removal of employee housing and other facilities would allow for more parking. Location of new parking lots should not be in previously undisturbed areas. Instead of seasonal parking at the El Cap cross over, the dump near the Old Big Oak Flat Road should be cleaned up and converted to parking.

I can't support the construction of underpasses in Yosemite. They would add too much of an urban feel to the park. This is Yosemite not Central Park. Using roundabouts would be a better way to control pedestrians and traffic.

The Yosemite Lodge area needs improvement for parking and pedestrian and traffic movements. Removal of the employee housing would free up areas for parking. There needs to be short term parking for people going to the restaurants and parking designated for guest only. Disabled parking is limited and not located properly. There should be spaces added near Hemlock and Alder.

Although tour buses constitute only a small amount of vehicles that enter Yosemite valley, they cause an unequal amount of problems with crowding, traffic and parking. The removal of tour bus parking and staging areas from the former Yosemite Falls parking lot has caused numerous issues. Guest parking was eliminated for both the staging area and long term bus parking. Having the staging area in the parking lot across from registration has increased pedestrian versus vehicle incidences both in the staging area and while going to Yosemite Falls. Much of this is caused when the tour groups walk and stop in the road instead of

using the sidewalks or do not pay attention when crossing the roads.

A new staging area for tour buses should be developed where the gas station was located. This would alleviate some of the traffic issues with having large groups of pedestrians trying to cross Northside Drive at the same time. Bus parking should be removed from the parking lot near Juniper and Laurel and be relocated in the parking area west of the maintenance buildings. The discharge of tour bus groups causes a huge influx of people in one area in a short period of time so the amount of tour buses that can stop in one area should be limited.

OTHER ACTIONS TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE RIVER VALUES

Restoration of meadows should include removal of informal trails. Temporary rail fences could be used to block off areas to be restored and direct use to less impacted areas or to established formal trails. While I find boardwalks to be a visual intrusion, I am starting to think that this might be the only way to prevent informal trails. I have already addressed the restoration of the Ahwahnee tennis and golf areas.

I agree with almost all of the River Values actions listed on pages 8 and 9 in the Concepts Workbook. However, I have one major exception; the removal of Stoneman, Ahwahnee and Sugar Pine bridges. Due to their cultural and historical importance to Yosemite, I would support redesigning and/or increasing channel complexity methods but not removal.

I also agree with the specific management strategies for the protection of recreational values as stated on page 9 of the Concept Workbook. Two of the bullets that I personally feel that are very important are Ranger patrols to promote stewardship and visitor protection and expansion of educational programs on Leave No Trace and minimum impact practices.

While Pete Devine has done very well in teaching and promoting LNT principles in the back country, there has been a lack of teaching and not enough promoting of LNT principles in the front country. I shudder every time I see what goes on at the Swinging Bridge Picnic Area during the Memorial Day Weekend where trash is thrown on the ground, wildlife is being fed, boom boxes are blaring, campfires are built on the river bank, people are jumping off the bridge and picnic pavilions are put up every where. Adding more picnic areas, possibly in the Upper and Lower River areas, would lessen damage and overcrowding in current picnic areas.

As I had said in my previous comment, Yosemite is the most abused of all the units that I have visited. A more extensive LNT program needs to be implemented in Yosemite and Rangers or volunteers should be sent out to educate the public, especially during peak visitation and in heavy use areas.

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in a Webinar and to comment on the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook. While I might have commented too much in one area and inadvertently missed others, I hope what I wrote will be helpful in some way.

If possible, could I be added to the list of people who would like a hard copy of plans mailed to them? Having a hard copy made it less frustrating and time consuming to read.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 362 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I have been visiting, and camping in, Yosemite National Park since the late 1950s. I thank you for your stewardship.

However, I urge that you not be such diligent stewards of the Park that you REDUCE the opportunities for its owners (the people of the country) to experience it in the same way that our predecessor owners and visitors have experienced it since 1916.

Specifically, please do NOT close any of the High Sierra Camps, including Merced Lake and Glen Aulin. They are a special part of the Park and its history.

Thank you.

(Now a Senior Pass Holder)

Correspondence ID: 363 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: My husband's favorite National Park is Yosemite, and the High Sierra Camps are his favorite thing to do in Yosemite. My son has been looking forward to hiking the High Sierra Camps with him for years and our whole family is planning to go this

summer. Please keep the High Sierra Camps open. Thanks So Much,

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Correspondence ID: 364 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am strongly against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The igh Sierra Camps are a special and unqiue part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise HSCs. Merced HSC is the largest of the camps, and for many people is their favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved. Please keep this wonderful camp open so that future generations can continue to explore this magnificent part of Yosemite.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 365 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hi, I have a disability that makes it virtually impossible for me to backpack into the deep backcountry of Yosemite for more than a night or two, and if I did, no one would put up with how slow I'd be. The High Sierra Camps enable me to enjoy the deep backcountry and I hope Yosemite keeps them forever. I promised my son I would take him when he's old enough and I'd sure hate to not be able to enjoy the High Sierra Camps with him. God Bless, and thank goodness for the High Sierra Camps that help people discover Yosemite's beauty beyond the Valley.

Correspondence ID: 366 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: It has just been brought to my attention that the park service is considering a restoration plan for Yosemite that could result in the closure of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, and perhaps set a precedent for additional camp closures. I am sure that the planning committee has the best of intentions, but as a participant in a 5 day High Sierra Camp guided tour in Aug 2010 I must strenuously object to any of these camps being shut down. I waited for years for the opportunity to hike the Yosemite high country, and I was not disappointed! It was a matchless experience and I hope to return soon. I am an American taxpayer who loves the Yosemite wilderness. Please don't make any rash decisions!

Correspondence ID: 367 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition Civic Groups
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: COMMENT FORM Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook Insert Yosemite National Park March 2012 Submitted by Brian H. Ouzounian, Co-Founder Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition April 20, 2012

1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? NO. NPS has failed to provide a concept that repairs the flood damaged campgrounds in Lower Pines, Upper River, Lower River, and Group Campground north of Tenaya Creek as related to the thousands of petition signers submitted in previous workshops and scoping session. Further to that failure, the NPS does not address many of the concerns submitted in scoping sessions that supplement the petition. The facts are that the condition of the existing ORV's is not impacted or detrimental to the Merced River as they exist. Reference the NPS remarks from slides that were shown at the March 27 webinar @ the time mark of 13' 30," including the time in the presentation when they were shown at the March 28 workshop: "No ORVs are experiencing segment-wide impacts." If this is true, why are you eliminating campsites in your alternatives (all that apply) and why can't the NPS offer the alternative requested above by thousands of campers in the petition offered by the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition? Why can't camping go beyond these concept sites and offer more affordable family friendly auto-based drive-in campsites to the likes of which have been submitted in writing? If this is true that no ORV's are experiencing segment-wide impacts, why are the bridges being removed? Isn't it true that WSRA states that if an existing facility is in place, WSRA does not command that it be removed and, in fact, if it needs a licensing permit, one can be obtained? It appears that the NPS has gone outside its boundaries and excluded the public access to affordable enjoyment of the Park's resources.

Where is the bike path circulation plan? You've been told, and you know, that campers and day visitors bring their bikes to ride the Valley. You've seen it. It is a clean way to travel for pleasure and to the market. Nothing in your plan has this included?

Where is a plan that addresses transportation? Are you still intending to bus in the "haves" that can pay the high revenue for the concessionaire? My guess is that you will behind closed doors after the plan is recorded in a decision.

No mention of removing rafting concessions and opening up rafting on personal floatation devices. Do you really intend to remove the golf course at Wawona, the swimming pool and tennis courts at the Ahwahnee? None bother the River or most people.

2. Do the Alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Explain. You are asking a question that cannot be answered by the

public both nominally and technically. The NPS goals seem to be quite different than that of the public and specifically the camping public. Radical imposition of NPS dreams that are unfounded to be necessary except for public perception. The details for the plans are far more radically wrong than the summaries suggest, creating public deception. Campers do not denigrate the River nor the Park resources; fixed roof lodging and the concessions do! Remember the trips per day it takes to support a fixed roof lodger? 10 to 1 for a camper! Encouraging camping is the only acceptable park activity that enhances the quality of the visitor experience and the ORV's.

3. Feedback on Alternative Concept 1: #4. Make day-use parking and picnic; #5. Do not relocate all but rather 100 each; #6. NO to all in its entirety; #7. Repair campgrounds to pre-flood conditions; #8. Agree as stated; #9. Do not remove any spaces; #10. NO removals and no realignment; #11. NO in its entirety; #12. No in its entirety; #13 NO in its entirety; #14. Remove stables, yes; add campsites; repair and upgrade Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

4. Feedback on Alternative Concept 2: #3. Are you going to provide bussing for concessionaire? #4. Do not do this! #5. OK as written #6. Relocate only 100 spaces #7. NO #9. NO #10. NO #11. NO #12. NO removal for road re-alignment and NO re-alignment #13. NO #14. OK but put where stables currently exist. #15. NO #16 Do not remove Merced Lake facilities but rather repair and improve them

5. Feedback on Alternative Concept 3: #1. No idea what this means. Please explain. #3. Why? Will you provide bussing? Seems to make no sense. #4. NO. Provide day-use parking and picnic. #5. OK but needs more parking. #6. Do not do this. #7. NO #8. Repair these campgrounds to pre-flood conditions along with Lower Pines and Group Camp #9. NO #10. NO #11. No removal for road re-alignment #12. No to walk-in and RV campsites; make 75 drive-in tent camping sites only for all mentioned. #13. Yes to stables removal but for more camping; Repair Merced Lake facilities and improve.

6. Feedback on Alternative Concept 4: #4. OK but provide picnic area. #5. Provide day-use parking and picnic area. #6. OK #7. NO #8. NO #9. NO walk-in; rather 75 drive-in auto based for tent campers #10. OK and also west of Clark's Bridge. #12. NO #13. No to walk-in and RV campsites; make 75 drive-in tent camping sites only for all mentioned.

7. Feedback on Alternative Concept 5 #3. This should be an increase to the present count and it should be "well graded" and spread throughout the Valley and not concentrated to one area. Shuttle service should extend to west Valley as well as to Sentinel Dome trailhead and Glacier Point. #4. OK on the boardwalks and viewing platforms; NO to restoring all informal trails as that will take care of itself with the boardwalks. No tree removal. #5. YES but all for small trailers and tent campers. NO RV. #6. West of Yosemite Lodge should be day use parking and picnicking. Other areas better suited for new campsites. How about east of the Ahwahnee parking lot near the current equestrian area. Other possible sites sent to you via a marked up map from the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition. #7. OK and also where stable currently exist. #8. OK #9. NO #10. THIS IS NOT A "NEW" CAMPGROUND!! BOTH 'RIVER' CAMPGROUNDS, LOWER PINES, AND GROUP CAMPGROUND ARE CURRENTLY CAMPGROUNDS IN NEED OF REPAIR. ALL PREVIOUS PLANS HAVE BEEN RECINDED QUALIFYING THESE SITES AS CURRENT CAMPGROUNDS AND AWAITING REPAIR?.we cannot believe you are pulling this one! #11. Only if a must due to rockfall #12. NO NO NO! The facts are that the condition of the existing ORV's is not impacted or detrimental to the Merced River as they exist. Reference the NPS remarks from slides that were shown at the March 27 webinar @ 13:30hrs, including the time in the presentation when they were shown at the March 28 workshop: "No ORVs are experiencing segment-wide impacts." If this is true, why are you eliminating campsites in your alternatives (all that apply)? We cannot believe you are pulling this one-hence the "Save North Pines" movement! NPS, what don't you get about this subject? Riverside camping IS an ORV and we have stated such in many submission statements and orally at workshops. Do Not Remove them, add more, please. #13. No to walk-in and RV campsites; make 75 drive-in tent camping sites these locations. Maximize new campsites and make new campground east of the Ahwahnee parking lot. Do not remove any bridges as they are historical and since there is "No ORV's experiencing segment-wide impacts," this should not be a problem. Maximize space where stables are to be removed and increase North Pines campsites for tent and RV camping.

8. Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered? A. Do all of the alternatives protect and enhance river values as stated in the March 27 webinar @ time mark 16' 22," including the time when they were shown in the March 28th Workshop? B. Yes. Repair all flood damaged campsites to pre-flood conditions in Lower Pines, Upper River, Lower River, and Group Campground north of Tenaya Creek. C. Add new campground east of Ahwahnee Hotel parking lot. D Do not re-align roads. E. Keep Northside Road in tact. F. What is with this re-alignment of the road and removal of bridges? Are you all still stuck on the 1980 GMP? I thought we were beyond that? The more I read this workbook and see what is in it and what is not in it, relative to transportation, the more I think you will someday reveal a bussing plan that will affect all park visitors after this plan is recorded. The NPS does these sneaky maneuvers year after year. Why is a transportation Plan not in plain view as a foundational planning element? G. Where is the bike trail/path along both Northside and Southside Roads to Bridalveil Falls as well as shuttle service to same? H. Remove concession rafting altogether for all concepts and allow private floatation devices from Clark's Bridge to Sentinel Beach WITHOUT PERMITS. Certainly this event will be less of an impact to the present concession of very large rafts. I. The Sugar Pine Bridge, the Ahwahnee Bridge, and Stoneman bridges all have several important aspects, not the least of these being important to a transportation and traffic circulation plan. They are 'historical' structures. They provide emergency access for evacuation and safety. They provide viewing corridors for bicyclists and the disabled in a practical sense and as an ORV. They will provide access to the Upper and Lower River Campgrounds, Group Campground, and the new Ahwahnee Campground (east of the parking lot, at such time as the NPS finally come to their senses and repair the flood damaged campgrounds.

I HAVE BEEN ACTIVE FOR 32 YEARS ON TRYING TO PRESERVE AFFORDABLE FAMILY AUTO BASED DRIVE-IN CAMPING AND FIND THAT THIS TEAM STILL IS INDIGNANT TO THE TENANTS OF THE FOUNDING FATHER'S IDEAS OF RESOURCE BASED PARK ENJOYMENT AND TO THE MANY WHO HAVE SPENT THEIR TIME AND DIMES TO BE INVOLVED WITH PLANNING EFFORTS AND OFFER THEIR OPINIONS AND

TESTIMONIES. DIFFERENT FACES AND NAMES FOR THIS NPS TEAM BUT THE WASTED PLANS CONTINUE. YOU'VE WONDERED AND ASKED WHERE THE RESPONDENTS ARE? YOU'VE CHASED THEM AWAY WITH PLANS THAT SPEAK TO THIS: "IT ISN'T WORTH MY TIME" AND "THE NPS IS GOING TO DO WHAT EVER THEY WANT REGARDLESS OF WHAT MY INPUT IS." AND SO, THIS WORKBOOK IS JUST ANOTHER WASTE OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS. TO BE ASKED TO READ AND COMMENT UPON THIS WORKBOOK IS AN INSULT TO THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED SO HARD AND SO LONG TO PARTNER WITH THE NPS; HOWEVER, I HAVE DONESO, NONETHELESS, WITH GREAT DISGUST. ALL CONCEPT PLANS ARE HEREBY REJECTED, EMPHATICALLY.

DON'T YOU PEOPLE READ WHAT HAS BEEN SENT TO YOU?

With guarded respect, [redacted] Co-Founder Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition (YVCC)

Cc: Kathleen Morse, Chief Planner, Merced River Plan, Yosemite National Park [redacted], Co-Founder, YVCC [redacted], Deputy for Senator Dianne Feinstein [redacted], Chief of Staff and State Director for Senator Dianne Feinstein [redacted], Deputy for Senator Barbara Boxer [redacted], District Director for U.S. Representative Jeff Dunham [redacted], Los Angeles Times

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Correspondence ID: 368 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am against the closing of Merced Lake HSC. The HSCs are a special part of Yosemite and Merced Lake Camp provides a vital stopping point between Vogelsang and the Valley, and between Vogelsang and Sunrise HSCs. Merced HSC is the largest of the camps, and for many people is their favorite camp. This is a fabulous Yosemite tradition that should be protected and preserved.

Correspondence ID: 369 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: American Alpine Club Conservation/Preservation
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Yosemite Planning Team:

The American Alpine Club (AAC) is pleased to supply comments on the Merced River Plan (MRP) Preliminary Alternatives. We applaud Yosemite National Park's comprehensive and robust civic engagement process in an effort to co-create the most fruitful plan for the Merced River Corridor. Our goal is to help park planners meet the stated goal of the MRP, which is to protect and enhance the values for which the Merced River was designated wild and scenic. As we submit these comments, our constituency is the well over 1.5 million climbers in the United States. As the sole US representative to the international climbing community (International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation/UIAA[i]), we also speak for millions of climbers worldwide who are directly affected by this planning process.

As you know, climbing is embedded in the history of Yosemite Valley dating back to John Muir who was both an important champion for the Park and one of the first Valley climbers. We are also quite honored to highlight that John Muir was the American Alpine Club's second president from 1908 to 1910.[ii] Indeed, Yosemite Valley lies at the center of the universe for climbers in America and abroad. It is an iconic destination for any aspiring climber and represents the apex of a lifelong passion for many. The cutting edge of worldwide climbing achievement'which expands the envelope of what is possible for all human beings'continues to happen on the Valley's walls that owe their existence to the Merced River.

As we look at the contributions Americans have made to the climbing craft, they have their roots in Yosemite Valley. During what historians refer to as the "Golden Age" of pioneer mountaineering and rock climbing following WWII, climbers in Yosemite developed techniques that, when exported, expanded the exploratory abilities of climbers around the world. Entry into one of our last frontiers, the vertical frontier, is based on "Big Wall" techniques developed in Yosemite Valley.

It is clear to us, and I hope to you, that there is no other place more important to American climbers and climbers abroad than this stunning landscape created by the Merced River. With this mind, we respectfully submit these comments to help park planners protect and enhance the climbing experience in the place known by climbers around the world simply as "The Valley." COMMENTS We recognize that the MRP in its entirety is a highly complex undertaking with multiple stakeholders, facilities and diverse ecologies being affected. In alignment with our organizational mission, our comments are focused towards protecting and enhancing the history and experience of climbing for future generations in Yosemite Valley. RIVER VALUES: CLIMBING AS A RECREATIONAL VALUE Before commenting on the Preliminary Alternatives, it is paramount to address some of the detailed elements of the River Values (ORVs) as mapped out on page four of the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook. In past scoping comments and meetings with the Superintendent and Park Planners, our organization along with the Access Fund has advocated that the MRP identify the activity of Climbing as an ORV. Not only is Yosemite Valley the epicenter of the evolution of climbing techniques and technology, but also climbers and early explorers like John Muir are a critical component to the Park's establishment, history, attraction and identity. Distinct from the other Recreational Values occurring in Yosemite Valley, only Climbing holds an "outstandingly remarkable cultural and historical value." In addition, it is important to recognize that climbing begins within the Merced River Corridor. Partners are matched, equipment is organized, routes are studied, planned and strategized and approaches are started all within the River Corridor. This is an important clarification to note with respect to the MRP. In alignment with past comments, we strongly recommend that the Park Planning Team add Climbing as a distinct Segment 2 Recreational Value. Without this added language, we are concerned that the MRP

will fall short in protecting and enhancing opportunities for future generations to climb in Yosemite Valley. RIVER VALUES: CAMP 4 AS A CULTURAL VALUE We are very surprised to not see Camp 4 identified as a Segment 2 Cultural Value in the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook. Along with the Wawona Covered Bridge (which is identified as a Segment 7 Cultural Value in the Workbook), Camp 4 is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.[iii] Because Camp 4 is nationally significant as documented by NPS Historian Paul Lusignan in February of 2003, the AAC believes it is critical to appropriately recognize Camp 4 within the context of the MRP. Since the MRP will be the important foundation for future planning processes affecting this area of the Park, we respectfully request that Park Planners act to ensure its commitment to sustaining and improving this nationally significant site. PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVE CONCEPT 3 The American Alpine Club generally supports modeling the Preferred Alternative on Preliminary Alternative Concept 3. Broadly speaking, we would like to see greater protection of the Recreational ORVs, which lie in and are accessed from the River Corridor. For example, the current Plan proposal ignores the obvious and extensive world-class climbing resources located immediately outside the planning area. We recommend that the Plan address the critical need to preserve and manage access to the recreational resources just outside the River Corridor. Because Climbing in Yosemite Valley requires extended periods of time for training and planning, the camping opportunities are critical to the public's experience of the Recreational Value identified in the Workbook.[iv] We support much of the proposed management actions in Preliminary Alternative Concept 3 because they aim to restore a significant 218 acres of riverbank, reduce the highest percentage of luxury lodging (by 17%) and increase a substantial percentage of rustic camping options (by 41%). These proposed changes will help restore Yosemite Valley to its more rustic condition, protect and enhance River Values and foster a deeper connection between visitors and the natural environment. Additionally, this deeper experience with the environment will engender increased levels of respect and stewardship for the Valley's natural resources, which is one of our fundamental shared objectives. CAMP 4 Our specific recommendations for Camp 4 include approximately doubling its current size to accommodate more visitors during the peak season (early summer to early fall), upgrading the bathrooms and increasing the much-needed adjacent parking. The use of walk-in sites that concentrate parking, rubbish collection facilities and bathrooms can protect riparian values including Recreational Values for climbers and other campers. It is our hope that the expansion of Camp 4 would capitalize on already disturbed adjacent land. Concept 3's proposed addition of 16 walk-in sites at Camp 4 is a reasonable start, but it will likely fall short in meeting visitor demand, minimizing the overcrowded nature and resulting impacts of this area.[v] Not only is it important to ensure Camp 4 is sustainable for generations to come in order to preserve its Cultural Value, Camp 4 renovations will foster a greater sense of pride amongst its users (primarily climbers) and elevate the sense of accountability of campers to protect this valuable resource. The AAC also encourages active involvement of its members not just in the planning but also in the on-the-ground construction improvements of Camp 4 through our Volunteers and Climbing Stewards Program. With Camp 4 improvements, we stand well positioned to educate and model the inextricable link between conservation and climbing in Yosemite Valley. We recognize that much planning has already gone into the much-needed renovation of Camp 4, and we applaud the Park for this work. The MRP should leverage past efforts of the Lodge Redevelopment Plan. In addition to increasing the user capacity of Camp 4, the American Alpine Club would like to emphasize the following suggestions: 1) Restroom facilities - This issue needs serious attention. From an impact standpoint, these facilities could be converted into composting toilets and rain/snow water collection if desired or simply an expanded network of traditional facilities. Basic shower amenities are also recommended. 2) Dish washing - Multiple designated dish washing areas will reduce impacts to individual campsites, ground water and river conditions. 3) Parking - Currently the dismal nature of the parking is a large source of frustration for users. Parking needs to be commensurate with the volume of sites and there needs to be multiple and distinct loading areas. 4) Site layout and materials - The campsites themselves could use a real overhaul to reduce impact and increase usability. The Park should consider raised tent pads that can accommodate the number of tents allowed per site as well as more clear division between sites. Campsite posts to handle registration tags should also be considered. 5) General layout - Reduce impact on soil and vegetation by making the most undisturbed areas off limits to foot travel. Again, the Park should consider adding natural divisions and more privacy between sites during the expansion of Camp 4. 6) Accountability and stewardship - Changes to Camp 4 should increase values of personal ownership and stewardship within the climbing community and all users of this historic site. ADDITIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE In addition to Camp 4, we support expanding a range of camping opportunities throughout the planning area to include walk-in, walk-to and group campsites. These can be situated in floodplain areas with infrastructure like parking and bathrooms located outside the floodplain. As with Camp 4, we support camping expansion on already disturbed land rather than land that is relatively undisturbed. Specifically, we support developing a new campground west of Yosemite Lodge, developing a new campground at the former Upper and Lower Rivers Campground area and expanding and restoring the group sites at the Backpackers Campground. We must emphasize that parking and transportation options are essential for the climbing public. The length and difficulty of Yosemite's big walls necessitates an atypically large quantity of safety equipment plus overnight bivouac gear. Climbing visitors, therefore, are oftentimes reliant upon the use of personal vehicles. Designated parking should be available at the majority of climbing destinations to ensure safety and limit resource impacts. Public transportation options should stop at key cragging destinations. In addition, if length-of-stay limits are increased for Camp 4 and the Backpackers Campground, this simple management action will reduce some amount of traffic resulting from campers needing to find a new place to camp during the peak season, which is quite common. In conclusion, we hope that these comments are helpful to this important process that will protect and enhance the River Values for all Park visitors. As the planning process progresses, we are committed to supplying greater detail on the points we have addressed in these comments. Importantly, we believe Climbing must be identified as an Outstandingly Remarkable Recreational Value in its most iconic destination in America. Second, the American Alpine Club believes it is critical to appropriately recognize Camp 4 as a Segment 2 Cultural Value within the context of the MRP. Third, it is our hope that the Park's Preferred Alternative will effectively balance much needed ecological restoration, expanded rustic camping options throughout the River Corridor, decreased urbanization and an overall restored pristine condition of Yosemite Valley. We thank you for recognizing the significance of Yosemite Valley to the climbing community and our deep commitment to protecting and enhancing the history and experience of climbing for future generations in Yosemite National Park. If the American Alpine Club can be of any support to you in this process, please do not hesitate to contact me at 303-384-0110 extension 15 or lgoldberg@americanalpineclub.org. Sincerely, Leigh Goldberg Conservation & Advocacy Director American Alpine Club Cc: Phil Powers, AAC Executive Director Mike Gauthier, YNP Chief of Staff Linda McMillan, AAC Yosemite Committee Chair Ed Dunlavey, YNP Wilderness Manager Mark Fincher, YNP Wilderness Manager Jesse McGahey, YNP Climbing Program Manager Brady Robinson, Access Fund Executive Director Chris McNamara, Supertopo ABOUT THE AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB The AAC provides knowledge and inspiration, conservation and advocacy, and logistical support for the climbing community. The AAC advocates for American climbers domestically and around the world; provides grants and volunteer opportunities to protect and conserve the places we climb; hosts local and national climbing festivals and events; publishes two of the worlds most sought?after climbing annuals; cares for the world's leading climbing library; and manages the Grand Teton

Climbers' Ranch as part of a larger lodging network for climbers. We have long been concerned with the disposition of Camp 4 and have recently brought climbers to Yosemite from around the world for our annual International Climbers Meet.

[i] http://www.theuiaa.org [ii] http://www.americanalpineclub.org/p/past-presidents [iii] http://www.nps.gov/yose/historyculture/upload/Camp-4.PDF [iv] The unique challenge that the Valley's big walls present demand that climbers stay in the Valley for extended periods of time. In order to meet Yosemite's challenge safely, they must spend time getting used to the unique characteristics of the rock and practice the techniques necessary for such long routes. Therefore, climbers need more camping sites and extended stays (up to four weeks). Climbers generally prefer a primitive camping experience as opposed to luxury lodging. If length-of-stay limits are increased for Camp 4 and the Backpackers Campground, this simple management action will also reduce the amount of traffic resulting from campers needing to find a new place to camp. [v] 16 additional sites is a 33% increase in camping site capacity prior to the 1997 flood.

-- [redacted] Conservation & Advocacy Director The American Alpine Club [redacted]

http://americanalpineclub.org http://facebook.com/americanalpineclub http://twitter.com/americanalpine

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Correspondence ID: 370 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please, do not close the Merced High Sierra Camp! It is a treasure that I have gratefully enjoyed through many years, and I strongly believe it should benefit future generations. Please, preserve the camp and the good it will continue to work in all its future guests. It is a real good in this world, and that must be celebrated and protected.

Correspondence ID: 371 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: It is critical that the Merced Lake River Sierra Camp remains part of the Merced River plan. Camps such as this are a gateway to all the varied experiences to be found in the Sierras. These type of facilities are the stepping stones on which many a future backpacker is born. The exposure to the uninitiated is priceless and must remain a part of the overall Sierra experience. Removing this camp could very well lead to a domino effect removing other existing and long term camps from the National Park Service, a system designed to provide experiences for everyone at all levels. The value of camps such as this ? priceless. And if removed from the system, that is one more door closed to the Sierras and its bounties. The best solution ? let this camp continue to do its part for one and all.

Correspondence ID: 372 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,06,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I have been told that there is a proposal to remove the High Sierra Camps from Yosemite National Park. As a lover of Yosemite and the outdoors, I have found that these camps allow people to enjoy, see and appreciate nature(and Yosemite) in a way that they might not ever been able to do before. Closing down these camps would shut thousands and thousands of people off from the enjoying beauty of Yosemite. With this said, I am strongly in FAVOR of keeping the High Sierra Camps open and available for all of the world to enjoy. Thank you for your time. Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 373 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Sierra Club - Tehipite Chapter Conservation/Preservation
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Attached please find the comments of the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. [redacted] Chair

----- Message from [redacted] on Wed, 18 Apr 2012 14:37:21 -0700 ----- [redacted] To: Merced River Plan comments Subject:

Tehipite Chapter Sierra Club P.O. Box 5396 Fresno, CA 93755

c/o [redacted]

20 April 2012

Superintendent Yosemite National Park Attn: Merced River Plan P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

This is being sent to <yose_planning@nps.gov>.

Sir:

The following comments are submitted on behalf of the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. The Tehipite Chapter encompasses all of Yosemite National Park. Thank you for this opportunity to make suggestions. We trust that you will find our comments to be of use in your efforts to protect the visitor experience and the natural resources of Yosemite National Park.

These are comments on the Merced River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook, dated Spring 2012. ---------- The Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook is very well organized and easy to read. We may not agree with some of the content, but at least it is easy to find. Or, in the case of what is lacking from the document, it is easy to determine that, also. We commend the people responsible for producing this reader-friendly document

According to NEPA and the CEQA Guidelines, the requirement for public involvement is quite limited. We appreciate the fact that, throughout this process, you have been going well beyond what is legally required in an attempt to involve the public. The big advantage of your having produced the Workbook is that it provides one more opportunity to try to get the Alternatives crafted in an acceptable way before the DEIS is released.

As you know, the Tehipite Chapter has participated extensively in the Merced River planning processes over the years. Based on that lengthy history, we have observed a gradual improvement in the Park Service efforts during the past two or three years. It has gotten to the point that we actually have a certain amount of optimism that the finished plan will be a good one this time around. That having been said, we do feel that there is room for improvement, and we offer the following comments toward that end. Although we may not make it clear everywhere, most of our comments pertain to the Yosemite Valley segment of the river.

USER CAPACITY AND FOOTNOTE FIVE:

The NPS has come up with proposed limits on how many people per day (including overnight) would be allowed in Yosemite Valley under various scenarios. Alternatives are suggested for 14,200, 14,900, 17,000, 20,500, and 24,000. These numbers are arrived at using parking space as the limiting factor. We do not believe that basing the number of people on parking capacity in itself addresses the need to base actions on impacts to natural resources.

Dealing with user capacity this way just leads us along the same old rut of thinking that everything in the Valley has to stay there, and all we need to do is provide parking to accommodate the demand for access to inappropriate facilities and services.

Basing user capacity on parking avoids the whole thrust of the Ninth Circuit Court ruling, which was epitomized by the court's oft-quoted Footnote Five. The NPS was contending that they have been protecting natural values all along, and don't need to do anything differently. In response to that, the Court asked how the huge amount of facilities in the Valley (garages, corporate offices, swimming pools, horse rides, raft rentals, redundant gift shops, etc., etc.) does anything to protect natural values. Footnote Five implied that the NPS was going to have to change how it manages the Valley.

Considering the implications of Footnote Five, the process should have started with re-examining the facilities and services offered in the park, which in turn would make it easier to examine the actual number of employees needed to operate resource-appropriate facilities and services in the park, which in turn would likely self-regulate how many people are in Yosemite at one time. We appreciate that the NPS apparently has done this to some extent, but we believe the process needs to be applied more rigorously.

STRUCTURING OF ALTERNATIVES:

NPS needs to drastically revise the way they are presenting the numerous possible management actions. The NEPA process typically breaks down when an agency presents formal Alternatives in the Draft EIS. Failure to present a suitable range of Alternatives in an acceptable way has been a frequent problem. In the present case, there are problems with the way these "preliminary Alternative concepts" have been presented.

Data and science should provide the foundation for a process of arriving at Alternatives. We believe this has been done to some extent, but the process needs to be clarified in the DEIS.

Hopefully the many different possible management actions will be presented in a way that enables people to say what they really want, instead of being confronted with false choices created by the packaging of management actions in illogical combinations. If the DEIS is adequately presented, these personal preferences would be based on clearly reasoned choices,

responsive to WSRA and other laws, and supported by study.

Management actions which are not relevant to user capacity should be treated differently than those that do relate to user capacity. For example, without regard to whether or not the Sugar Pine bridge should be removed, it doesn't seem that the decision has anything to do with user capacity. But, in the Preliminary Alternatives, bridge removal has been linked to user capacity---fewer people is associated with more bridge removal, whereas if there are more people then fewer bridges would be removed. We don't see the connection. (That is just one example.)

We believe that the list of "actions common to all alternatives" needs to be expanded considerably, and the list needs to be clearly set aside so the citizen can focus on what truly differentiates one Alternative from another. If an idea is a good one, and is not related to user capacity, why shouldn't it appear in all Alternatives? Restoration of wet meadows is another example. If a meadow is wet, it should be restored regardless of which Alternative is being discussed. (This is just one example.) ----------

GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE SPECIFICS WHICH FOLLOW:

Within the constraints of protecting the visitor experience and the other resources, we advocate maximizing the opportunity for people to experience the Park. Limiting access should be the last resort. Improved management would minimize the need for limiting the number of people The Workbook includes a broad range of possibilities for the plan, much of it intended to improve management of congestion on busy days. If crowding is not controlled, it would be necessary to resort to day-use permits for visitors, something we would like the Park Service to avoid if possible. Within the constraints of protecting the visitor experience and the other resources, we would like to see the Park made available to the greatest number of people possible. We encourage the NPS to select options that manage crowding in the park to ensure that day-use permits are the last resort. These options would include: (1) increased public transportation in and around the park and its gateway communities, (2) the use of an Intelligent Transportation System for real-time information about park conditions, (3) roundabouts at key intersections, (4) overflow parking lots which are small and dispersed, (5) and minimally invasive infrastructure such as boardwalks in meadows.

Our support for some of these specifics is explained, and qualified, in more detail below.

SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT OPTIONS DIRECTLY RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION:

The Workbook's relative silence on the subject of transportation seems inexplicable. If it is not addressed in the remaining NEPA processes, the final MRP will inevitably be seriously flawed.

Most of our comments are directed toward in-park transportation issues. However, underlying that should be a discussion of regional transportation.

We would like to advocate that adequate regional transportation from each of the gateway areas be available, including Fresno. That having been said, we have to point out that the analysis needed to determine the impacts of regional transportation on river ORV's has not been done. By that we mean impacts on visitor experience as well as on natural values. Still with us is the legacy of the 1980 GMP calling for the complete elimination of all private automobiles. That misguided objective of the GMP has been the source of much rancor and ill-advised management actions, leading to much of the current congestion problem. (Example: Large-scale elimination of parking without first implementing an adequate shuttle system.)

By their nature, public transportation systems are dependent on large volumes of passengers in order to be economically justifiable. If it is intended that regional transportation have high ridership, and we believe that it must, then where is the NPS analysis of the impact of large numbers of visitors? For that matter, where is the NPS analysis of the impact of the increased number of visitors which a really good in-Valley shuttle system would attract?

We are NOT saying we are opposed to regional transportation or an improved in-Valley shuttle system. We ARE saying that the required analysis to support such transportation systems seems to be lacking.

The Workbook suggests that, so far, the attempts to deal with user capacity have been based on parking. This is fine as far as it goes, but it would be terribly inadequate if the remaining NEPA processes do not expand way beyond that in determining user capacities.

That having been said, we offer a few more specific comments:

(1) We are opposed to large parking lots, especially in the relatively natural west Valley.

(2) We advocate overflow parking lots, provided they are small and dispersed so as not to be noticeable. An Intelligent

Transportation System could enable arriving visitors to find the parking areas with available space.

(3) But no one is going to want to park their car if there is not an adequate in-Valley shuttle system. The first two Alternatives suggest "limited options" on buses. It is not until the third Alternative that it says there will be any buses. We strongly feel that having an adequate in-Valley shuttle system should be an integral part of every Alternative. By "adequate" we mean a system which goes as far as the Pohono Bridge, with stops at numerous points, and with headways which would encourage ridership. The system should be designed to encourage visitors to experience the Valley in its totality. The existing in-Valley shuttle system is grossly inadequate . (We have a problem with the buses themselves, but that is probably beyond the scope of this project.) (4) If there is no other way of funding in-park transportation improvements, as a last resort we might accept a "transportation fee" at the park entrances. (We recognize that every park is different, making comparisons risky. But we can't help but wonder where Zion found the money to set up and operate their bus system.)

(5) Fort Yosemite would be an ideal place for the bus maintenance facility, if there are going to be any in-Valley shuttle buses.

(6) We are opposed to pedestrian underpasses. Structures which utilize grade separations to manage traffic flow belong in an urban setting, not a national park. We would prefer to see the pedestrian crossings relocated to places where the conflict with vehicular traffic is reduced. The situation at the Lodge/Lower Falls is a prime example of a place which could benefit from reconfiguration, possibly making an underpass not necessary. Pedestrian underpasses are simply too permanent in character, as well as being vastly more intrusive. If developments are kept on the surface, they can be more easily moved or removed as changing circumstances may warrant.

(7) The road roundabouts are not as intrusive because they are at grade level.

OTHER SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:

(1) The DNC employee housing complex immediately to the west of Curry Village never should have been built. The rockfall risk in that location is obviously greater than in most places. However, since the facilities are already there, and are fairly new, they should be utilized for visitor accommodations instead of employee housing. From a risk management perspective, it makes sense to limit the amount of time people spend there. Visitors are here today, gone tomorrow, whereas it is totally unacceptable for an employee to be exposed to the risk 365 days out of the year. NPS could require that visitors be put on notice that nature is unpredictable. Some of the less risky visitor accommodations could be converted to employee housing. (That might also address the concern that DNC has very little family-friendly employee housing.)

(2) Boardwalks in the meadows are intrusive; but their saving grace is that they are temporary in nature---easily removed or relocated.

(3) It is time for the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp to be removed. During the run-up to the 1984 Wilderness designation we tried to get the HSC's incorporated into the Wilderness as "pre-existing, non-conforming" uses. That would have made it possible to relocate ones which were in bad places. But the powers-that-be chose to create a Swiss cheese Wilderness. Which meant that the HSC's were locked into non-Wilderness enclaves. Since the location of the Merced Lake HSC is not acceptable, the only choice is to remove the camp. Its removal would reduce demand for access to the trails between Happy Isles and Merced Lake, which tend to receive a very high level of use.

Thank you for seeking public comments on this planning project. We trust that you will find our comments to be useful.

Correspondence ID: 374 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I was recently made aware of the recent Merced River Plan which details three of five options stating the elimination of the High Sierra Camps.

I am writing to you to voice my concern, and outrage, that this possibility is even a consideration. Having been an avid hiker, backpacker, and lover of the outdoors my entire life, the thought of eliminating even a portion of any of these camps would be a disaster. I sincerely believe, and have witnessed numerous times, the value these camps have on a variety of individuals. Many people who used to backpack, and are no longer able to do so, have the chance to continue to enjoy an outdoor experience with the help of pack teams. Others, not having the experience, or the desire, to commit fully to backpacking, are able to venture into the national park wilderness with experienced guides, or on their own, because these camps exist. Not only do these camps provide an valuable backcountry experience for a wide range of people, young and old, they are historically irreplaceable and should be preserved. As an educator, I am very concerned that we do whatever we can to promote the outdoor experience, and importance of National Parks to our present student population. These are the children who will provide the security of attendance our National Park Systems require. To eliminate the High Sierra Camps would result in terrible loss to future generations, and may very well provide the most valuable experience most people will ever have of the backcountry in the high

Sierra.

Therefore, I ask that you keep, complete and without elimination of any kind, all the High Sierra Camps as we know them,

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Correspondence ID: 375 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: 19 April 2012 RE: Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan, High Sierra Camps and Loop Trail Dear Superintendent Neubacher, I have a deep regard for the dual missions of the National Park Service of preservation and enjoyable access. Yosemite's High Sierra Camps have provided access to many who could never access the wilderness experience without some assistance. Hiking the Loop trail was one of the most transformative experiences of my life. I do not support of the series of alternative concepts which propose the elimination of camping infrastructure at the Merced High Sierra Camp, which would foreclose the possibility of completing the Loop. I have submitted my comments on the web site but wanted to reach you personally with my feedback. I hope you might take a few moments to read the attached essay about how hiking the Loop has allowed me to preserve my soul while parenting a child with severe disabilities. Also attached is a low-res photo taken in 2006 shortly before a tremendous storm broke just outside Merced Camp. Many backpackers were flooded out, and hikers who made it in to camp thought that they might have died had the camp not been there to provide shelter. Merced Camp has provided an important way station for people accessing the wilderness for decades, with relatively low impact, especially compared to what is available in the Valley. For me, and the folks I've met on those hikes, the High Sierra Camps exemplify the best of what the National Parks have to offer. The camps support the dual missions of the National Parks: to preserve scenic beauty, and to provide access for the public's enjoyment. The interpretive education provided by the naturalist ranger on a guided hike is unparalleled, preserving an important cultural wilderness tradition that is not replaceable by plans which value a total self-sufficiency available only to a narrow range of the completely able-bodied public. Please honor the dual purposes of the NPS and please do not close off one of the few wilderness experiences available to people of average means and physical abilities. Please keep the healing wilderness experience provided by the High Sierra Camps and the Loop trail available to the public. Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 376 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Parks Superintendent: I understand there is some discussion of removing stock from Yosemite National Park. That would be a travesty. I have horsecamped there many a time, and it is a life-sustaining experience. In addition, every hiker we've come across has been thrilled to see horses. Horses have roamed California for centuries...I cannot think why anyone could think they are environmentally inappropriate. PLease, please, do not take away this extraordinary experience for those of us who choose to explore with horses and mules

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Correspondence ID: 377 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please do not change the current recreational use of the Park by stock users. We own three mules specifically for our camping/packing trips that we enjoy throughout the summer months. My husband and I, along with our grandchildren will not be able to enjoy our parks to the extent that we now do without our horse and mules. Please do not take this privilege away!

Correspondence ID: 378 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,06,2012 18:30:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Please see comments section below.

Topic Question 2: Please see comments section below.

Topic Question 3: Please see comments section below.

Topic Question 4: Please see comments section below.

Topic Question 5: Please see comments section below.

Topic Question 6: Please see comments section below.

Topic Question 7: Please see comments section below.

Topic Question 8: Please see comments section below.

Topic Question 9: I recommend more shuttle service: Expand shuttle service to Glacier point, Wawona, Mariposa Grove. More frequent service between Wawona and the Valley: and earlier departure from Wawona and a later departure from the valley.

Earlier start between Wawona & the Mariposa Grove. Expand Valley shuttle service to West end.

Comments: At workshop, we learned the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook is condensed from the original and not everything is included. That makes it difficult to comment on. Also learned there was another Alternate Concept of 'No Change' that was not included in the Workbook summaries.

Please leave the Merced Lake HSC & the Wawona Golf Course as is. There is no scientific evidence that they are causing any harm to the river. The Wawona Golf Course was established before the Wawona area was included in Yosemite NP. It provides enjoyment for people and is scenic. The Merced Lake HSC uses 'leave no trace' practices and provides for a portion of the population to enjoy wilderness who would be unable to do so through unassisted backpacking.

Does the Tuolumne River Plan request the removal of the Glen Aulin HSC also. The HSCs are used mostly by people 40+ and those without sufficient skills or comfort level for backpacking solo. Removing any of the High Sierra Camps will deny the opportunity for many people to enjoy the beauty, grandeur of the High Sierra Wilderness.

A lot of the responses to "Why" something was to be removed, was answered with 'better for the river.' Yet National Parks were established for protecting resources AND for providing access for people to enjoy the river.Some of the 'Remove' items aren't even causing any harm to the river, but someone wants them removed?without any regard for the other half of the stated purpose, 'Providing Access.'

The alternatives are to make the Valley less crowded. There used to be 40% more camping sites and parking in the Valley during the pre-flood years. There were more visitors pre-flood, but it seemed less crowded. I think if you restore the full amount of camping and affordable lodging, people will leave their cars at those sites and walk or bike to enjoy the valley. Instead, people now have to make it a day trip which leads to much more traffic and congestion on the roads and in all parking areas.

The Yosemite Conservatory, which funds many of the Yosemite Park's projects, is supported by volunteers & public donations. Day use visitor's are not likely to financially support the conservatory, but those who can come and stay regularly are among their supporters. Please devise a plan that supports regular long term visitors and decreases 'drive through' day usage.

I am opposed to the day use reservation system that is proposed. The Half Dome permit has created a fiasco and made it difficult for anyone to actually get a permit at the purchase price. They are being snapped up and scalped.

Wawona Store Parking Lot: I recommend that commercial buses be banned from parking in the Wawona Store Parking Lot. When designing the new South Entrance Parking lot, I suggest adding picnic areas & rest rooms there. The entire area by the Wawona store is needed for visitors to the History Center, the Store, the Post Office and the picnic areas. It used to be a peaceful and relaxing area. Now, cars can't find a spot because busses are taking up all the spaces and NONE of the facilities there can accommodate even one bus load of people...not the store, the picnic area nor the bathrooms. And, it makes the river area and the History Center feel chaotic, crowded and hectic, nothing like the intent of the area.

Please keep all of the sites at the Wawona Campground. This is the 'locals' campground. People have been coming here year after year for generations (including my family). They love the park, take care of the river and enjoy their favorite sites along the river, where they can hear it's beautiful sounds. It's gotten difficult to get any site here over recent years and removing any sites would only make it more so. The campground is only one mile long. If these sites are truly causing damage, provide the scientific evidence of that and brainstorm an alternative that would protect the river while also providing access.

I am very much in favor of 'round abouts' and pedestrian underpasses to alleviate the traffic (vehicular and pedestrian) at intersections in the valley.

PLEASE keep the Happy Isles Snack Stand. After a hike at that end of the park, (from Half Dome, Vernal or Nevada Falls, Panorama Trail), it is the only place one can get a cool drink or ice cream snack. If it is a problem where currently located, move it closer to the Happy Isles Nature Center. My kids love that little snack shack. The promise of a stop there has gotten us through many hikes with them and created wonderful memories for them :-)

I would like to keep the Wawona, Valley & Tuolumne Stables. The Wawona Stables next to Pioneer History Center seems appropriate. My kids love their annual stage coach rides with Ranger Burl telling them stories about horses and stagecoaches as modes of transportation for the pioneers. The ride is entertaining and has historical & educational value. Horses have an important history in the park. How are the stables harming hte river?

I vote to restore all the campground sites in the Valley. I vote for additional sites at the Upper & Lower River Campgrounds. I vote to keep Housekeeping Camp at its current level. It is a great option for families and provides access to a protion of the river that is wonderful for swimming and rafting. Please retain all lodging as is at Housekeeping Camp.

Please do not add any RV campgrounds or loops. In fact, please ban the RVs from teh park roads. RVs belong at the entrances of National Parks, not in them. The narrow, windy, mountain roads are not designed for them or commercial buses. The commercial buses pollute the air and cause traffic back-ups Plus, their high profiles block the views. The noise of the RV generators in a campground are so disruptive to the enjoyment of the Park for others. Please provide parking and camping

facilities for RVs near the entrances and then provide shuttle services from there. That will greatly reduce the congestion and traffic issues.

Correspondence ID: 379 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Friends of Yosemite Valley Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,06,2012 23:51:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See comments.

Topic Question 2: See comments.

Topic Question 3: See comments.

Topic Question 4: See comments.

Topic Question 5: See comments.

Topic Question 6: See comments.

Topic Question 7: See comments.

Topic Question 8: See comments.

Topic Question 9: See comments.

Comments: General Comments for 2012 MRP Preliminary Alternatives

Thank you for seeking comments on the MRP before publishing the draft EIS.

For 20 years my home was just downstream from Yosemite Valley in the Merced Canyon. In the decades I lived and worked in Yosemite National Park, my husband and I were employed by the park concession; I also worked as an environmental educator, a writer and editor, and volunteered many times for the National Park Service. I have been following the Merced River Planning process intensively for the past decade, and I have been a member of Friends of Yosemite Valley since 2005.

I recognize that this river planning process is a complex responsibility for the National Park Service. And I understand that the task of creating a legal river plan for the popular Wild and Scenic Merced River can make park managers feel as though they are laboring against considerable economic pressure. It's obvious not all citizens agree which facilities and services are appropriate, especially within the confines of a seven-mile long Yosemite Valley.

Though some of the management actions listed in the workbook make ecological sense, I'm sorry to see the lack of data to back up authentic restoration actions. Yosemite may be many things to many people, but the NPS must not lose sight of the fact that this plan will have implications for future generations; it is the job of the NPS to preserve and protect for future generations. This is precisely why every action taken in a valid Merced River Plan must be justifiable.

Yosemite's future needs to be pointed towards preservation, and park access issues need to be weighted towards social equity rather than caving to economic privilege. And along the lines of social equity, I am requesting the NPS post all comment letters for scoping, preliminary alternatives, and the draft EIS in an easy to read online format so that citizens can be fully engaged and informed of the public record during this planning process. The public also needs the NPS to better explain the legal distinctions of the rivers act and demonstrate the science of the unique cultural and biological values that made Yosemite a national park in the first place. Yosemite is not a contest; it is a national treasure that belongs to us all.

I'm disappointed in the preliminary alternatives mainly because I had been hopeful. I had hoped that after all those years of losing in court, park planners would finally do the right thing and engage in a sincere effort to create a valid plan for the Merced. Even though this is the park service's third attempt at a river plan, it appears the real issues facing user capacity in the Merced River corridor are still being avoided and/or purposely distorted. Even though these alternatives are preliminary, it seems park planners have approached this river plan backwards. I'm also disappointed to see that this third river planning process is in serious danger of not following the spirit, or, perhaps, even the letter, of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act . . . again.

The alternatives simply jumble together with vague "restoration" and questionable brand development projects like constructing a large parking lot in the West Valley and adding more asphalt to campgrounds to accommodate more motor homes in Yosemite Valley, and building high density employee housing in El Portal which would require developing land along the banks of the Merced and would increase the number of employees commuting on Highway 140; these options imply a failure of imagination and are suspiciously similar to some of the most controversial actions in the rescinded Yosemite Valley Plan; recycling the YVP is illogical and could even be seen as insulting to citizens and local residents who have engaged in Yosemite planning for all

these years.

The apparent paucity of data about the condition of natural values and natural processes in the Merced River corridor is surprising to me. Though there may be complexity with making this plan, a lot of time has passed since the Settlement Agreement and it seems the park would be farther along by now. (While some studies and reports were made available just a few days ago online, there is still a lot of information missing, even for commenting on preliminary alternatives. For example, why is it taking so long for the park to share a valid transportation study or an up-to-date risk assessment for rockfall danger with the public? And, most citizens following this plan are under the impression that the public comment period closed on April 20, so how would they even know to check back to view these studies and reports that were recently posted online?)

Perhaps most unfortunately, introducing these preliminary alternatives to the public like a contest continues to polarize people. Making this plan into what feels like a voting free-for-all could stir up more public fear about access, freedom, and even employment, and I do not see how this is good for Yosemite or the people who love it. I am choosing not to vote for management actions at this time, however, it is my hope that engaging in this public process might help turn around this river plan for the Merced, before the draft EIS comes out and it is too late.

Looking through the various management actions in the workbook did give me some ideas for how to articulate my own prescription for Yosemite. Below I've listed some big picture suggestions for tackling Yosemite's future in terms of user capacity.

Sincerely[redacted]

Some Additional Big Picture Thoughts To Consider: If it were objectively decided that services and facilities would be reduced in Yosemite Valley to better protect the river values for future generations, this reduction in jobs in Yosemite Valley would need to be done using a carefully phased, step-by-step approach. In other words, employees impacted by the scaling back of services/facilities in Yosemite Valley could be given options that coincide with planned retirement, severance packages or re-training in another park job. And, certainly, a moratorium must be put on the business mindset emphasizing continual growth that has proliferated in Yosemite up until now.

1) Immediately repurpose an existing or under-utilized building(s) in Yosemite Village so that the "low-level" concession employees living in the employee dorms referred to as "Granite Landing" (just west of Curry Village) can be moved out of the looming and unacceptable danger there due to rockfall. No need to wait for the results of a study due out in summer 2012 to know that no one should be expected to sleep in harm's way as they are now; these employee dorms should have never been built and the fact that they exist is shameful, this is a serious public safety disaster waiting to happen.

2) Reduce and then strongly regulate private bus tours to Yosemite. Eliminate concession's ability to use the Ahwahnee Hotel as a conference center and special events location, at least eliminate those events clearly unrelated to Yosemite National Park. (Conferences and special events have increased over the past decade in Yosemite Valley and this increases the need for more employees and more supplies needing to be trucked in to the park.)

3) Get an accurate number of full and part time employees of DNC for each season of the year. Get an accurate figure for number of full and part time employees of NPS during each season of the year. Get an accurate figure for number of full and part time agency employees (YI/NatureBridge, Medical clinic, Ansel Adams Gallery, Yosemite Conservancy schools, etc . . .) during each season of the year.

4) Get an accurate number for park employees who live and work in Yosemite Valley, El Portal, and other communities within Yosemite National Park. Get an accurate count of park employees who commute to work in private vehicles, as well as an accurate count of those who regularly take YARTS busses. Require DNC and all agencies operating in the park to make it convenient for all their employees to commute on a shuttle.

5) Get an accurate figure for number of NatureBridge students/groups in Yosemite Valley, per day and per week; reduce number of groups allowed in Yosemite Valley, at least during late spring when visitation in Yosemite Valley is up. (The number of instructors and student groups in Yosemite Valley has gone up since the early 1990s . . .)

6) Relocate DNC headquarters and, where appropriate, most warehouse operations to Mariposa. Move NPS Resources Management offices back to Yosemite Valley from El Portal; allow some NPS law enforcement and first-responders to stay in the Valley. Relocate most of NPS administration, spread between existing offices in El Portal and Mariposa.

7) Yosemite Lodge: Convert from motel-type lodging to day use and camping areas, and possible day use parking and/or employee housing if necessary.

8) Camping: Concessionaire Stables area closed and re-developed as new campground with drive-in sites; eliminate commercial horse rides and pack trips in Yosemite Valley.

9) Camp 6: Restoration of floodplain and riparian area; relocation of parking northward to former location of DNC

headquarters.

10) Curry Village: Reduction in lodging, including removal of units within the most up-to-date rockfall hazard zone; keep Curry Orchard Day Parking

11) Housekeeping Camp: Remove lodging facilities and replace with camping and day use picnicking with adequate public bathrooms; Restoration of the riparian and 10-year floodplain

12) Paddling: Private paddling allowed on all stretches of Valley river segments, including wilderness, by permit, however, commercial boating prohibited.

13) Remove Merced Lake High Sierra Camp; restore/convert area to a backpackers' campground like Little Yosemite Valley.

14) Greenmeyer Sandpit: Restore the sandpit to natural conditions; remove fill material and recontour

15) El Portal Valley Oaks: Designate oak protection area encompassing drip-line of trees and remove infrastructure and parking in the area and restore understory

16) Remove the NPS trailer offices in El Portal near community hall.

17) Protect the cultural values (Native American) and restore the natural values at Patty's Hole in El Portal; protect swimming and fishing as recreational ORVs.

18) Require El Portal Market and/or the El Portal Community Hall to maintain public restrooms to protect natural values of river in El Portal.

20) Protect and restore designated wetlands in El Portal and examine the need for bulk fuel storage in El Portal.

21) If there is still a need for housing additional concession employees in El Portal, convert the NPS administrative Warehouse Complex at Railroad Flat into dorms and supply a free shuttle service for those who work in Yosemite Valley.

Correspondence ID: 380 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Wawona Property Owners Association Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 12:56:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am opposed to the elimination of the Wawona Golf Course as part of Alternative 1.

Topic Question 3: I am opposed to the elimination of the Wawona Golf Course as part of Alternative 2.

Topic Question 7: I would prefer any alternatives -- 3, 4, or 5 if they retain the Wawona Golf Course.

Comments: The Wawona Golf Course, opened in 1918, should be preserved as a cultural resource -- not just as a recreational facility. As one of the few organic golf courses in the US, the impacts on the Merced River have been minimized. It is a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, and only reclaimed gray-water is used to water the greens.

The benefit of restoring the golf course to a more natural state is minimal, as the actual area of the golf course is only a small percentage of the adjacent meadow.

Correspondence ID: 381 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I am strongly opposed to the elimination of the Wawona Golf Course.

Topic Question 3: I am strongly opposed to the elimination of the Wawona Golf Course.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 382 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form

Correspondence: I thought Greg Stock did a good job on presenting the Resource Protection for the Merced River Plan. I always get confused with the ORV concept Outstandingly Remarkable Values. How can the average visitor understand this concept? Park Service is reaching out to minorities visiting Yosemite. How can they understand the Merced River Plan with the 5 Alternative Concepts?

I was very impressed with Kathleen Morse's NPS presentation of the overview concept for the Merced River Plan. I know the Park Service staff has worked long and hard on presenting the latest development on the Merced River Plan. I was amazed how many people are working on this. It was a very professional presentation.

I work at the Mariposa Chamber Visitor Center. We give visitors, including MANY foreign visitors our information on visiting Yosemite National Park. If it comes to day-use reservation, how will the NPS help the foreign visitor who has just a limited time to visit Yosemite?

I think addressing transportation in Yosemite Valley is very important for the busy summer season and holidays. This past summer we had the rangers from Arch Rock Entrance help us. It really helped. They could sell the passes for entrance into Yosemite, 7 days and the Yearly "America the Beautiful Pass" for a whole year, and the Senior Pass for lifetime.

-Has NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives? The NPS has presented alternatives that are pretty drastic. I believe in protecting the Merced River, but so many of the alternatives seem so extreme. Why take out the Yosemite Lodge and limit more places for visitors to stay? I do believe in offering more camp sites in Yosemite Valley.

-Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? The atlernatives are too extreme in protecting the Merced River. I don't think it will make much difference to take out Ahwahnee Bridge and Sugar Pine Bridge. I do believe in reparing the over use of the banks of the Merced River along the camp ground. The restoration of Devils Elbow area is a good example. I do not believe in taking out the Curry Stables and the Merced River High Sierra Camp. The mule trips give visitors a chance to see Vernal and Nevada Falls. The Merced Lake High Sierra Camp goes with Voglesang and Sunrise HSC.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #1 This plan is too extreme. What good will it do to take out the Tecoya Housing? The [unreadable word] Offices need to stay in Yosemite Valley where they are. The managers need to live close to the concessions opperations. It is too far to commute from El Portal or Mariposa daily for their operations.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #2 Alternative Concept 2 is also too extreme. I do think the day parking at Curry VIllage under the Apple Orchard would be paved with drainage. That can be a big mess! I do think more RV sites is a good idea. Don't take out the stables. Allow the day rides and Mirror Lake.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #3 Again too extreme. I do like the new no drive-in sites to develop the Upper and Lower RIver Campgrounds. This will allow visitors to camp without being next to an RV. Keep Merced Lake High SIerra Camp open. Keep Stable sin Yosemite Valley for visitors.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #4 This Alternative is better. But keep Ahwahnee and Sugar Pine Bridges. I'm in favor of more employee housing in El Portal. Having a El Portal REmote Visitor Parking area is a good idea. Would this be best for day use visitation? Again I'm for walk-in camp grounds with Upper River Campground area. Use the amphetheater in the Lower River campground, have walk-in sites for both campgrounds.

-Feedback on Alternative Concept #5 This concept is the most reasonable. The Merced River would be protected. More camp sites would be available to visitors. I like addressing the parking issue with parking in the East Yosemite Valley as well as El Portal. Restore the area by the Ahwahnee Hotel where the golf course was and the tennis courts Keep Housekeeping Camp open!

-Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered? If day-use passes in the peak season are used, what about the Foreign Visitors? Will he have access to a pass if it is his only day to all Yosemite Valley? Also, Yosemite Valley is not that crowded year around! Why not still offer ice skating and skiing in the winter? Transportation is the biggest issue. Do offer more day parking so shuttles can take visitors into the upper Yosemite Valley. Will day use permits be a year around plan? In Mariposa, our Chamber Visitor Center is comming up with 100 things to do in Mariposa area and wait to go into Yosemite Valley in late afternoon or early monring during the summer season.

Correspondence ID: 383 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Board of Supervisors, County of Tuolumne County Government
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

As a Gateway Community, the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan Alternative Concepts Workbook. The Yosemite National Park is an essential part of Tuolumne County and our Board is dedicated to working collaboratively with The National Park System (NPS) towards best management practices to ensure maximum access for the general public. Our Board continues to advocate for maximum accessibility with minimum, unnecessary restrictions. Therefore, any comments submitted by our Board will reflect a desire to emphasize user

experience.

Page five of the workbook relays requests that were dismissed as they were considered outside the scope of this planning effort. It is clear that the NPS listened and applied stakeholder concerns as the items contained within this list were of the utmost concern to the future accessibility and usage of the general public. One of the key concerns was reducing or eliminating private vehicles and the NPS has made it clear through this statement that they have no intention of eliminating private vehicles the right to enter the park. The NPS is to be commended on the proactive measures taken to offer alternative means of transportation into the park by encouraging use of the Yosemite Area Regional Transit System (YARTS). Increased usage is further encouraged by extending bus routes to Tuolumne County. Utilization of YARTS maintains accessibility while providing for a better overall experience by reducing traffic congestion within the park.

Upon review of the five alternative concepts, our Board applauds number four as it at least maintains current usage; however, our Board leans towards prioritizing increased visitor use and capacity. With that said, our Board recommends identifying concept number five as the preferred alternative in the DEIS since it is the only alternative that increases camping, lodging, parking and user capacity while also providing for restoration projects. During the various stakeholder meetings NPS staff relayed that the resources within the park were in good condition. This is great news as this new plan should provide the opportunity for conditions to improve, yet relays that current and past usage has not caused park resources to deteriorate.

The County also requests that the DEIS include a study of the economic impacts associated with all five concepts.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook. The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors is committed to ensuring the health and viability of Yosemite National Park through a proactive partnership with the National Park System and other Gateway Communities.

Sincerely,

[redacted], Chairman

Correspondence ID: 384 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: 8. Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Has the possibility of creating housing in Fish Camp been considered for park employees/DNC employees? Also, I am concerned about the removal of Boys Town housing where will Nature Bridge students stay? We are already struggling to provide low-cost housing for schools so that they can continue to afford our programs.

Correspondence ID: 385 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: 1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternative?

I didn't think so until I read the last alternative wich I find to be the most realistic. I like it for the following reasons: It doesn't remove 2 very nice bridges - more importantly it doesn't touch Merced Lake HSC. It gives back more of what was lost in 1997 in hopefully a more logical, less temporary way. It gives back camping and parking - with some alternatives that guests (company) can be forced to utilize such as parking and housing in El Portal.

2. Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Explain.

I would hope so since so much time, effort and cost has gone towards it.

3. Feedback on Alternative Concept 1.

Too restrictive for both those visiting and those working in Yosemite. Doesn't do anything to address day visitors and traffic. Creates a valley that is less recreational for the majority of visitors and their needs. Is there science to back up the necessity of being so restrictive regarding the use of the river. Do not like removal of people's ability to raft on the river. Maybe should be more controlled but not limited to such an extent.

4. Feedback on Alternative Concept 2.

I don't like the idea of day use permits required to visit a National Park - to me it is a travesty that anyone would not be allowed to visit the park. And the cost of having someone to check permits in parking lots seems like it would be prohibitive on the backside. While I agree that traffic is the worst thing one encounters here on a busy day - can those days be identified and

addressed separately? More effort needs to be put into having a parking area and a bus system to bring people into the park rather than a permit system. Do not agree with removal of Wawona Golf Course, bridges, Merced Lake HSC, stables. Find more bed spaces out of Valley. Agree with removal of all "temporary" housing.

5. Feedback on Alternative Concept 3.

Like the fact that it increases camping and theoretically will mean less traffic. Like the idea of housing in El Portal but type of housing needs to be looked at as well as the bus system that will need to be in place to get employees to the Valley. Housing should be better than the stuff to be removed from Valley - geared to a longer term resident, i.e., private w/bathrooms and storage. More thought needs to be put into the infrastructure in El Portal. Like the idea of a fee system for driving into Valley and parking/congestion.

6. Feedback on Alternative Concept 4.

Like transportation fee @ entrance stations and overflow parking establishment.

Like the idea of walk in compgrounds in former Upper Rivers Campground area and other campground additions.

Like that it does not affect the stables or Merced Lake HSC.

7. Feedback on Alternative Concept 5.

Most reasonable of all alternatives and more inline with the spirit of America's National Parks and the historic usages of Yosemite. Still pares down usage. Would like to see some control of commercial rafting - maybe a change to where people can put in their rafts or usage of the river banks - maybe reduction in #'s of boats each day - more careful monitoring. Like restoration of river banks in a more selective way. I don't know if lodging really needs to go back to where it was pre flood or even close but I think camping spots should go up.

8, Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

I don't really understand the goal to be out of the 100 year flood plain when it happens so rarely - I understand removing stuff from the yearly high water areas and paring down what is in those slots.

Has the potential been explored to use the area to the south of Cathedral Beach area south of Southside Dr. in between Cathedral Rocks and Sentinel Rocks either for parking or housing.

Correspondence ID: 386 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: 1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives?

No. There should be additional alternatives to safely increase park attendance. This workbook appears to have been written in such a manner that a reasonable person would select options that reduce visitation, even if that is not what they truly want. Four options of varying reduction and one of significant increases? Really? Who are you pandering to?

2. Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Explain.

It appears so. However, due to the language used in the workbook, I find it difficult to answer this question definitively. Also, what purpose does removing Wawona's stable serve? And, relocation of the Village Garage will only increase traffic and pollution if the buses have to drive in and out of the park. How is that good? What purpose does repurposing shops serve? Lastly, reducing the size of Wawona, Lower Pines and backpackers camp? Why?

3. Feedback on Alternative Concept 1.

Too much removed. Reduction in over-night accomodations will only increase the demand of the day-use visitor. Removal of bridges (Ahwahnee and Sugar Pine) will only reduce the locations guests can bike. Why not rebuild the bridges with longer spans? For site specific #7, if the decision is finally made to not fix the campgrounds along Northside Dive, then we should renovate the area.

4. Feedback on Alternative Concept 2.

Same as Concept #1.

5. Feedback on Alternative Concept 3.

Same as Concept #1.

6. Feedback on Alternative Concept 4.

As mentioned earlier, I do not agree to reductions in overnight accomodations, as this will only increase day-use demand.

7. Feedback on Alternative Concept 5.

I like the idea of increasing the size of Lodge and adding camping sites. However, the number of units mention seem a bit steep. Can there not be an option to add fewer units?

8. Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

I do not remember which options had them, but here's what I liked...adding round-abouts at certain intersections, adding pedestrian tunnels at specific crosswalks and the addition of parking in El Portal.

Correspondence ID: 387 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: 1, Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternative?

Seems that you started with a diminished status quo. The existing condition is based on the reduction of camping spots which came about after the "100 year flood" a few years ago. If this is true then an alternative 6 should include restoring the "washed out" campground.

2. Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Explain.

Sure. It is always in the interpretation.

7. Feedback on Alternative Concept 5.

Alternative 5 considers people as visitors. The design must balance a prestine environment with a managed system. Its flaw is it reduces accomodations for "everyday americans."

8. Are there other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

See responses 1 and 7.

Correspondence ID: 388 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: 1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives?

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments. I believe the High Sierra camps are one of the most important aspects of Yosemite National Park. On reading the proposed alternatives, I see that of the five alternatives, only one would keep the camps. They should not be eliminated. Many people who come to the Park year after year come to love it and come to look for a different, new experience that the high camps offer. They "graduate" to these trips and come to experience the great wilderness that the park offers. This is a place that is unique on the planet and these opportunities need to be continued. People who come love the back country become some of the park's most ardent advocates and supporters!! I am one of them.

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 389 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,08,2012 11:52:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2: I support efforts to greatly reduce human impact in Yosemite Valley, but I'm against elimination of the Merced Lake HSC.

Topic Question 3: I'm against elimination of the Merced Lake HSC, though other action items in this plan are v constructive.

Topic Question 4: I'm against removing Merced Lake HSC from public lodging, though other elements of this plan are valuable.

Topic Question 5: Most balanced approach which preserves the High Camp experience while reducing its human impact.

Topic Question 6: Does not adequately address the ever-increasing impact of visitors on Yosemite Valley.

Topic Question 7: Alternative 4

Topic Question 8: Alternatives 1, 2, & 3 all would remove Merced Lake HSC from public use. These choices would remove a valuable public educational opportunity embodied in the ranger-led "loop trips," which provide truly unique chances for the public to learn important facts/lessons about the Sierra environment and methods of reducing human impact while enjoying and honoring the wilderness experience.

Topic Question 9: Intelligent management of the High Sierra Camps provides an ideal opportunity for the Park Service to showcase methods of living lightly in the back-country. Additional steps could be taken to further reduce impact on trails and High Camp sites. For example, introduction of additional solar or water-driven (Merced, Glen Aulin) power generation could provide electricity to Camp kitchens and reduce the number of gas canisters that currently need to be supplied by mule train. Merced River flows throughout the summer season are sufficient to provide this power generation without any significant impact to the river's flows or to the visitor's wilderness experience.

Comments: Our family has frequently lodged at the High Sierra Camps over several decades. They have provided an unprecedented opportunity to introduce our children and their friends to back-country experiences and to teach the important principles of no-impact living in the wilderness. They have served as a "home base" from which to launch multi-day backpacking expeditions into the farther reaches of the Park. The Merced Lake High Camp is especially strategic as it provides a gateway to remote regions in the eastern part of the Park.

Over the years and decades we have seen significant progress at the High Camps at reducing human impact and restoring public areas to more natural settings. Further re-design to include water-flow based power generation could reduce trail impact by mule trains even more. The Camps individually and the "loop trip" experience provide truly unique opportunities for visitors to partake of the back-country in its still wild state. The High Sierra Camp concept provides one of the very few "hut hiking" possibilities in the US. It is a gem of a program that should be refined and improved, not eliminated. This is a clear opportunity for the Park Service to demonstrate how to create and manage a no-impact experience when visiting the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 390 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: General comments:

The High Sierra camps are one of the most important aspects of Yosemite National Park! They provide an opportunity for many people to experience the wilderness who otherwise would not. People driving through the park have one experience. People who spend a few days in the back country have quite a different experience. That experience often changes their lives, and they become wilderness lovers, protectors and supporters of the National Parks. We need these people to continue to experience the back country. Not everyone wants to backpack, and the High Sierra camps allow a much more diverse group of people to experience the back country.

Yosemite's wilderness is about 720,000 acres - a huge area for just back packers. Each High Sierra camp is only a few acres - a very tiny, but very important space for others to experience the wilderness.

I've been a Ranger in Yosemite for 36 years and the High Sierra camps are one of our most important assets. The experience they provide is by far the best in many peoples' lives. Merced lake High Sierra Camp should remain.

Thank you, [redacted]

3. Feedback on Alternative Concept 1.

Too extreme. Merced Lake High Sierra Camp should remain as is!

4. Feedback on Alternative Concept 2.

Too extreme. Merced Lake High Sierra Camp should remain as is!

5. Feedback on Alternative Concept 3.

Merced Lake High Sierra Camp should remain as is!

7. It is good to replace the lodging and campground sites that were reduced after the flood of 1997.

Correspondence ID: 391 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: 1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives?

Yes - They did a great job. It was a big job and they put lots of time and effort into it.

2. Do the alternatives address the stated goals for this plan? Explain.

Very much - Good work. This was NOT easy.

3. Feedback on Alternative Concept 1.

This is the only Alternative I want for the Merced River Plan. None of the others do enough to bring more nature to the area and less people and commercial interests - "put the people in cages and let nature out" - works for open zoos.

Correspondence ID: 392 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: 1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives?

Yes the NPS has done a very thorough job of presenting a broad range of alternatives. I attended both meetings at Fort Mason in San Francisco and was very impressed with all of the employees that presented. You definitely have the right people in place! Transparency and being open minded were the orders of the day. Congratulations on a job really well done!

2. Do the alternatives address the stated goas for this plan? Explain.

I think the alternatives that were presented provide the wide range needed to speak to all stakeholders. One of the things that was mentioned in regards to traffic control was the idea of using real time information to inform the public of traffic and user load so that people will avoid over use days. This should help spread out the number of user days and avoid a frustrating situation for the public and NPS.

3. Feedback on Alternative Copncept 1.

I am only going to endorse Alternative Concept 1. Though I have visited Yosemite frequently during the past 32 years, I am in favor of the most restrictive use of the park even if it is too great and I have already modified my behavior by only visiting the park during the winter or at other times when I know there are fewer visitors.

I just think that the unique resources in Yosemite especially in the most used portions of the park deserve maximum protection and restoration. I am therefore in favor of a reservation system for those 100 days around summer when the system is normally overtaxed. Appreciation of the park should come with the realization that there may be days when individuals will be excluded. Also very much in favor of restricting automobiles to a minimum leval due to air and water pollution.

Correspondence ID: 393 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: 1. Has the NPS captured a wide enough range of reasonable and feasible alternatives?

The NPS has captured a wide enough range of alternatives that address the stated goals for the plan.

In making a choice among the alternatives I am influenced by "Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report, 1865" by Frederick Law Olmsted. In 1864 Congress set aside Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove for public use, to be managed by the State of California and an eight member commission. Olmsted was the first chairman of the commission. In the 1865 report Olmsted drew a very careful balance between providing for the visitor experience and protecting the resource.

To protect the resource now and into the future it is necessary to have the ongoing political support of the citizens of California and the rest of the United States. This will insure appropriate funding and park management for future generations. But for this to happen as many people as possible need exposure to the wonders of Yosemite. Thus I support alternative concept 5 which protects the resource while providing the visitor experience to the greatest number of people.

Correspondence ID: 394 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: DELETE

Correspondence ID: 395 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,08,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The stated alternatives generally state intent that reflects the goals of the Merced River plan.

Some of details seem counter to the overall statement. For instance relocation of employee bedding would only create more people traveling into and out of the valley. This seems like it would ultimately increase the impact to the land. None of these plans talk about reducing motor-vehicle traffic in a useful way. The additions of bike racks to the buses would be great of course. What about the addition of transport logistics planner who could increase the current transport system efficiency? Or a more adaptive system to help reduce the need for transport within the park? If motor-vehicle traffic is a significant impact then why isn't there a stronger proposal for increased alternative transport options? The idea is still to promote Yosemite and reach a wide audience with education about this and other natural resources is it not?

Topic Question 2: Alternative Concept 1 appears to be the most restrictive and I personally feel is excessive in its restriction to public access. Yosemite valley has always been an excellently accessible resource for a wide range of individuals. Many of whom would be unable to observe and learn about this natural resource without at least some of the current amenities present at the various sites. This plan makes access to much of Yosemite's more remote and interesting areas possible for only the most dedicated, experienced and healthiest individuals. This seems counter productive to reaching a wider audience and conveying the importance of preserving our natural resources.

Topic Question 3: Alternative Concept 2 is similar to concept 1 in it's aggressive reclamation of wild acres. Although this appears to be in line with the overall goals of the plan it may not be as healthy over all if part of the plan is to also 'support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River...' If we make it difficult for many of the less able bodied persons to access the resource then it will ultimately lead to other problems when most of the voting population don't understand the importance of resources like this.

Topic Question 4: Alternative Concept 3 seems to be much more inline with all of the stated goals of the plan. The only problem I see with it is the complete removal of one of the High Sierra Camps. The High Sierra Camps have long been one of the very best ways for a wide variety of people to experience the high sierras and possibly one of the only places in America where less able bodied individuals can still experience such remote and wild beauty. I think that reducing the lake Merced camp to a temporary pack camp would strongly undermine the effectiveness of the high sierra camp system as an accessible resource.

Topic Question 5: Alternative Concept 4 does not completely devastate public access to the park so it seems much more in keeping with the overall goals of the national park system and with parts of the stated plans goals as well. I would still prefer to see more promotion of responsible use of the area through education and access rather than restriction and elimination of public services and access.

Topic Question 6: Alternative Concept 5 appears to want to promote the park more which I think is vitally important to it's long term survival. This still provides for restoration while addressing issues of visitor increase. It is the least exclusive, making the park overall more accessible to a greater range of individuals.

Topic Question 7: Alternative Concept 5 is my preferred plan out of the proposed plans. Alternative concept 4 would be my second choice if it was felt that alternative 5 did not focus enough on restorations to the river.

Topic Question 8: Alternatives 1-3 seem almost to restrictive making the area much less accessible, something I feel goes

against one of the goals of the restoration plan.

Topic Question 9: What possibilities are there of placing more responsibility on the concession services provider to establish better conservation practices? It seems to me that a less profit driven approach to park services might leave room for better resource management and better overall experience for visitors to the park.

Comments: Overall I am excited to see discussion about the conservation of one of our countries most wonderful resources. I am a bit alarmed to see the possibility of such extreme restrictions to that resource. Many of the changes proposed seem to only undermine the overall goals of educating the public and protecting one of our nations wilderness areas. If it becomes to difficult to access many people may start to wonder what the point of retaining the land is in the first place.

I hope that whatever the ultimate decision is it is one that tries to encompass a more welcoming and educational attitude toward potential visitors. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

Correspondence ID: 396 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,08,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The stated alternatives generally state intent that reflects the goals of the Merced River plan.

Some of details seem counter to the overall statement. For instance relocation of employee bedding would only create more people traveling into and out of the valley. This seems like it would ultimately increase the impact to the land. None of these plans talk about reducing motor-vehicle traffic in a useful way. The additions of bike racks to the buses would be great of course. What about the addition of transport logistics planner who could increase the current transport system efficiency? Or a more adaptive system to help reduce the need for transport within the park? If motor-vehicle traffic is a significant impact then why isn't there a stronger proposal for increased alternative transport options? The idea is still to promote Yosemite and reach a wide audience with education about this and other natural resources is it not?

Topic Question 2: Alternative Concept 1 appears to be the most restrictive and I personally feel is excessive in its restriction to public access. Yosemite valley has always been an excellently accessible resource for a wide range of individuals. Many of whom would be unable to observe and learn about this natural resource without at least some of the current amenities present at the various sites. This plan makes access to much of Yosemite's more remote and interesting areas possible for only the most dedicated, experienced and healthiest individuals. This seems counter productive to reaching a wider audience and conveying the importance of preserving our natural resources.

Topic Question 3: Alternative Concept 2 is similar to concept 1 in it's aggressive reclamation of wild acres. Although this appears to be in line with the overall goals of the plan it may not be as healthy over all if part of the plan is to also 'support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced River...' If we make it difficult for many of the less able bodied persons to access the resource then it will ultimately lead to other problems when most of the voting population don't understand the importance of resources like this.

Topic Question 4: Alternative Concept 3 seems to be much more inline with all of the stated goals of the plan. The only problem I see with it is the complete removal of one of the High Sierra Camps. The High Sierra Camps have long been one of the very best ways for a wide variety of people to experience the high sierras and possibly one of the only places in America where less able bodied individuals can still experience such remote and wild beauty. I think that reducing the lake Merced camp to a temporary pack camp would strongly undermine the effectiveness of the high sierra camp system as an accessible resource.

Topic Question 5: Alternative Concept 4 does not completely devastate public access to the park so it seems much more in keeping with the overall goals of the national park system and with parts of the stated plans goals as well. I would still prefer to see more promotion of responsible use of the area through education and access rather than restriction and elimination of public services and access.

Topic Question 6: Alternative Concept 5 appears to want to promote the park more which I think is vitally important to it's long term survival. This still provides for restoration while addressing issues of visitor increase. It is the least exclusive, making the park overall more accessible to a greater range of individuals.

Topic Question 7: Alternative Concept 5 appears to want to promote the park more which I think is vitally important to it's long term survival. This still provides for restoration while addressing issues of visitor increase. It is the least exclusive, making the park overall more accessible to a greater range of individuals.

Topic Question 8: Alternatives 1-3 seem almost too restrictive making the area much less accessible, something I feel goes against one of the goals of the restoration plan.

Topic Question 9: What possibilities are there of placing more responsibility on the concession services provider to establish better conservation practices? It seems to me that a less profit driven approach to park services might leave room for better

resource management and better overall experience for visitors to the park.

Comments: Overall I am excited to see discussion about the conservation of one of our countries most wonderful resources. I am a bit alarmed to see the possibility of such extreme restrictions to that resource. Many of the changes proposed seem to only undermine the overall goals of educating the public and protecting one of our nations wilderness areas. If it becomes to difficult to access many people may start to wonder what the point of retaining the land is in the first place.

I hope that whatever the ultimate decision is it is one that tries to encompass a more welcoming and educational attitude toward potential visitors.

Correspondence ID: 397 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: WAPOA Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,08,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: yes

Topic Question 2: too restrictive for public enjoyment

Topic Question 3: too restrictive for public enjoyment

Topic Question 4: too restrictive for public enjoyment

Topic Question 5: I support this conceptual plan.

Topic Question 6: Impact too high on the environment.

Topic Question 7: Prefer alternative #4

Topic Question 8: all the others

Topic Question 9: no

Comments: Heavy use of River Rd, swinging bridge and Wawona Store river side areas in Wawona create a need for public toilet or expanded public toilet facilities. Seeing used toilet paper on the ground in these beautiful recreational areas is not conducive to enjoyment of the natural beauty we all hope to enjoy.

Please, please, please improve the toilet facilities at Bridalveil Falls.

The Wawona golf course is historic and should be maintain. Consider non toxic fertilizers to prevent harm to the environment. Yosemite can help set that standard for golf courses, right? If not Yosemite, then who?

Place all large scale NPS employee housing in El Portal. The commute to Yosemite Valley from Wawona is too dangerous due to frequent winter and spring icy conditions and steep cliffs next to roads without guardrails. I am in support of single family residence NPS housing in Wawona in the existing houses the NPS owns or will own. Please provide funds to repair or replace homes for needed housing instead of letting empty NPS owned house sit and deteriorate. I am not in support of development of new housing for NPS employees in Wawona, except to replace existing structures. Any dormitory style house in Wawona is strongly opposed by me, as it may negatively affect the historic character of the Wawona township.

Correspondence ID: 398 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau Business
Received: May,08,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: 40637 Highway 41 Oakhurst CA 93644 Phone: 559-683-4636 / Fax: 559-683-5697 www.YosemiteThisYear.com

Mr. Don Neubacher, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Comments Regarding the Merced River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau Madera County

Preface

As you know, the Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau is tasked with marketing the Southern Gateway to Yosemite on the State Highway 41 corridor. In addition, the Bureau has a responsibility to the visitor to advocate on their behalf so that our main

attraction, Yosemite National Park, remains "For the benefit and enjoyment of the people". The above inscription on the Roosevelt Arch at Yellowstone National Park, dedicated in 1903, serves as a reminder to all, including the administrators of the public's National Parks, that the public is deserving of the right to access their parks. We find it extremely frustrating that while attempting to "appease" the litigants, the Yosemite planners seem to have lost sight of their responsibility to the masses.

After the floods of 1997, Congress appropriated 187 million dollars to "restore damaged property caused directly by the disaster to its pre-damaged condition". Approximately 17 million dollars of that was to repair the damaged campgrounds. The campgrounds were never repaired and remain closed today. Lodging that was destroyed was never rebuilt. Staff to the House of Representatives acknowledged that: "It is clear that the National Park Service is using the occasion of the flood to advance an entirely separate agenda from flood restoration". It is very apparent by many of the alternatives presented in the current iteration that the Park Service is attempting to advance the agenda of denial to the American and International public. Deny the public adequate campsites, deny the public adequate parking, deny the public lodging, deny the public many recreational opportunities and deny the public unfettered access to its National Park.

Many of the alternatives, under the guise of the wild and scenic rivers act, seek to remove historic bridges, reduce lodging by 50%, remove the skating rink, remove the golf course, remove the stables, close Merced Lakes high country camp, initiate a day use reservation system, increase gate fees, and remove the Yosemite Lodge. To even suggest that any of these alternatives serve "the people" is truly absurd. The wild and scenic rivers act does not require removal or relocation of any development that was in place prior to the river's designation. The developments slated for removal or relocation was in place prior to 1987, when the Merced River was designated.

Day use increase is a result of massive reductions in lodging and camping, obviously leading to more traffic congestion. Park statistics are very clear that overnight stays have been reduced dramatically (over 400 thousand since 1996). Congestion has been self-inflicted by the Park Service and now the visitor pays the price.

Alternatives

Unfortunately, the host of alternatives presented for comment appears to be nothing more than a "shotgun" approach to planning or presentation of efforts. By throwing out a mix of severe and less severe plans in hopes that the public will buy the least invasive one, is an old trick, but a trick none the less. This is akin to offering six dollar a gallon gas instead of ten dollar a gallon gas to assuage the public into accepting the lower but still inflated price. Our bureau cannot accept any of the alternatives. We stand ready to discuss rational alternatives that keep recreational services intact, restore campgrounds lost to the flood, leave the bridges for the enjoyment and use of the public and for public safety and restore parking incrementally lost over the years. We believe the millions of visitors to Yosemite will be better served and continue to have the freedom to access their park.

Sound management of the Merced River corridor without the draconian measures is possible. The Park Service has done an excellent job up to this point in continually providing protections while maintaining access.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to the continuing process. We are hopeful that future MRP presentations will provide opportunities for gateway residents to engage park planners in their various communities.

Respectfully, [redacted], CEO [redacted], President

Correspondence ID: 399 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 10:40:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I am greatly saddened to see that any plan presented would effect the golf course in Wawona. The golf course has played a valuable role in Wawona for almost 100 years and is a treasured piece of my families' past. It is well known and an excellent resource for the area. Esthetically it blends in well with the rest of the park and provides a wonderful recreation resource for park patrons. Removing the golf course would have a tremendously negative impact on Wawona area businesses. Any plan that includes the removal of the Wawona Golf Course is a plan that is critically flawed. The golf course is as myth a part of Yosemite history as the Washburns and the Awahnee Hotel.

Thank you.

Topic Question 8: Removing the golf course from Wawona eliminates a valuable resource that park visitors have been enjoying for almost 100 years. No one should consider such an action.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 400 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Prioritize the MRP I attended the Wawona workshop on May 4 on the Merced River Plan. Most of the meeting dealt with restoration projects in the Merced River and the meadows in Yosemite Valley. I came away feeling that "if the planners could

just keep people out of the Valley, it could be restored to its natural beauty." My concern is: What are the priorities of the park planners? Most of the audience wanted more parking and campsites. Of the five choices the river plan offers, only #5 returns the Valley to pre-flood conditions. The other four choices limit access to large parts of the river corridor by designating large tracts for restoration or as riparian vegetation. Because funds for the park are always limited, the final river plan should list priorities. For example: Taking out bridges in the Valley should not be accomplished before parking and campsite replacement. If the final plan for the Valley calls for limiting access because of crowding during high use periods, parking in areas like Wawona must be a priority. When people pay to enter the park and they are shut out of the Valley, many end up along the South Fork. Parking and visitor safety become issues in the Wawona area. Limiting tourists in the Valley causes the surplus to overflow into attractions like Glacier Point, the Pioneer History Center, and the Mariposa Grove of the Big Trees. Limited parking at the South Entrance and the Big Trees causes tourists to park in the Wawona Store parking lot where they can catch the free shuttle bus to the big trees. Very often Wawona becomes a giant parking lot encompassing the store lot, both sides of Highway 41 and areas off Chilnualna Falls Road. One "priorities of the 'plan'" should be to solve the parking issues in Wawona along the South Fork and Highway 41 to ensure visitor safety. As an old time camper in Yosemite Valley (first time in 1938 in Camp 11), I see a disturbing trend in park planning. It is the concentration of people. In the past few years parking at Mirror Lake, Happy Isles, Indian Caves, behind the post office and along most roads has been eliminated. After the flood in 1997, many of the campsites were closed which also took away parking spaces. Now the tourist population is concentrated at shuttle bus stops. The trend has been to eliminate access. Four of the choices in the river plan workbook concentrate the park visitor population. The long term plan seems to be "come in for the day on a bus, stand on the blacktop, and look, don't touch, and get out of the park by sundown."

Correspondence ID: 401 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 12:15:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: please go to the comments section

Comments: Who do you think will access the back country if you take out one of the high camps? Merced Lake is 14 miles up from the Valley floor, 15 miles if you go to Sunrise and then to Merced, and 15 miles from Tuolumne Meadows via Vogelsang camp. All of these are tough hikes, especailly if you are over 70. Keeping the circle of the camps intact assures that the back gountry will be open to all. Also, keeping the horse option for travelling to the camps is important. My family has a history dating back to 1929 in the Park when uncle F went to work as a bus boy at the Lodge. He ended up managing the Ahwahnee hotel for ten years. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 402 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Thanks to all of you for the very informative site visit and workshop provided to Wawona property owners on Friday, May 4. I AM STRONGLY SUPPORTIVE OF ALTERNATIVE 5 for the following reasons: I understand you are still operating under the 1980 Yosemite Management Plan. In 1980 California had a 24 million population; today it is closer to 36 million, a 50% increase. Just for CA visitors, you must realistically provide for more, not less, parking and accommodations. Increasing Campgrounds would be the most cost-effective method to deal with congestion and parking problems. Camp sites usually provide parking for two cars which are likely to park and stay. This would tend, also, to reverse the day-use: overnight ratio. Seasonal Campgrounds. We visited one on the Colorado, west of Grand Canyon, and there must be many more. This was situated in the high water area. It functioned well in late spring through early fall. Then the picnic tables were picked up and stored; the bathrooms were prepared and the rising Colorado washed the campground clean. In the spring, the fire pits were dug out and tables replaced. So, what's the problem? Total Valley Parking-5,500 vehicles. (Workbook, pg. 26) Several years ago the Superintendent (I believe it was Bennewiess sp?) told us at a WAPOA meeting, that there were only 820 parking spaces in the Valley, but, since we knew where they all were, it was no problem for us. Because you deceptively refer to vehicles not parking spaces, you are declaring your standard to be: 820 cars parked while 4680 cars circle looking for a place. No wonder there is a problem. (Go ahead, count the spaces.) Michelle Stauffer's commonsense analysis: That the Four Million Visitor year in 1995 was much less disruptive than the one in 2011 was, largely because of more accommodations and parking. Just go back toward the pre-1997 levels for parking, campgrounds, and accommodations. The Wawona Golf Course should be retained, if only to preserve the meadow. The Mariposa Grove Plan sounds like it will benefit the serious parking and congestion problem around the Wawona Store at present. A response would, of course, be appreciated. Thank you,

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Correspondence ID: 403 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: (1) The classroom presentation was only about 1 = hours long and participants were only given one time to talk, so if someone made a comment, that you agreed with or wanted to add to, you could not. But the majority of heads nodded in agreement for almost all comments made. It would have been easy for the moderator to ask for a show of hands of agreement, instead of listing the comment just once. (2) Please leave the Merced Lake HSC & the Wawona Golf Course as they are. I asked what 'scientific basis or harm were they causing. The Scientist Ranger said, they were causing no harm to the River. They were suggested for removal because someone thought they do not belong in a 'Wilderness Area.' The Wawona Golf Course was established before the Wawona area was included in Yosemite NP. The Merced Lake HSC & other High Sierra Camps were established so that 'non-backpackers' (such as myself, a 70 year old female), could experience the wilderness. The Merced Lake HSC has a leave to trace philosophy and educates all who come there (as do the other HSCs). My response to the "Wilderness Purists" is that there are hundreds of miles of trails that are only accessible to backpackers. It causes them no less enjoyment if the High Sierra Camps' loop is left as is so that the thousands who can't backpack have an opportunity to see, enjoy the wilderness also. Please keep all the High Sierra Camps as they are. I have not seen the Tuolumne River Plan but I would image the same people will

request the removal of the Glen Aulin HSC also. The HSCs are used mostly by people 40+ and those without backpacking skills or physical capabilities to backpack. Removing any of the High Sierra Camps will deny the opportunity for many people to enjoy the beauty, grandeur of the High Sierra Wilderness. (3) A lot of the responses to "Why" something was to be removed, was answered with 'better for the river.' Yet National Parks were established for protecting resources and for providing access. We heard a lot about Protecting Resources, but almost nothing about Providing Access. It seems that what we see & hear is 'Remove-Reduce' and nothing about 'Providing Access.' Some of the 'Remove' items aren't even causing any harm to the river, but someone wants them removed?without any regard for the other half of the stated purpose, 'Providing Access.' Please focus on 'Providing Access' as that is half of the mandate in title. (4) RE: making the Valley less crowded. There used to be 40% more camping sites and parking places in the Valley during the pre-flood 1997 years. There were more visitors pre-flood, but it seemed less crowded. Even Concept 5 does not bring the camping & parking up to the pre-1997 flood capacity. NPS showed us graphs of increased "day use." Of course, because NPS's actions have caused increase day use by not restoring the lost camping sites nor the parking places. It seems more congested because the cars keep circling looking for parking places that have not been replaced. Also Yosemite Lodge lost rooms were not restored. (5) The Yosemite Conservatory is not funded by visitors who can only spend a day in Yosemite. The Yosemite Conservatory, which funds many of the Yosemite Park's projects, is supported by volunteers & public donations. I am a member of the Yosemite Conservatory because I have had the opportunity to fall in love with it because I was able to enjoy extended stays in the park. I have enjoyed over 40 years camping and hiking. I wonder how many "Day Use Visitors" support the Yosemite Conservatory. (6) Day Reservation/Permit System is being proposed by NPS and there were many objections to this. Similar to the Half Dome permits which has grown into a "business" of people getting them and then selling them on ebay & craigslist. There are also people who come to Yosemite without going to the Valley. My family camped in the Wawona Campground for over 30 years and only once or twice went into the Valley. I prefer first come/first allowed. I do not want a Day Use or Permit System. (7) Wawona Store Parking Lot: I recommend that commercial buses be banned from parking in the Wawona Store Parking Lot. When designing the new South Entrance Parking lot, I suggest adding picnic areas & rest rooms there. That whole area is needed for visitors to the History Center and the Store and the Post Office. The current plan is that the parking places adjacent to store front will be 20-min limit for store customers & for access to the post office. [I don't see how this ever be enforced.] The rest of parking lot will be made into long slots for the 8 commercial buses, as they will no longer be able to park across the street. When I asked why should there be any places needed for them if there is going to be a large parking lot at South Entrance for the Mariposa Grove? The answer I was given was that the riders may need to use rest rooms, or want to visit History center, or may want to use picnic area. Not until later, did I think to mention the Picnic area & rest rooms are not large enough to handle one bus load, let alone up to eight. (8) Wawona Campground-please do not remove any camping sites. We are told it is good for the river; to restore its shorelines. People are still going to walk the shoreline. My opinion is that the one mile of shore line that the Wawona Campground includes, the river can do without its shoreline vegetation in order to give the public access to the River and the camping sites, which at the current level are extremely hard to get?let alone if the count is reduced 40%. Keep the same number of sites and especially those along the river. The noise of the river helps to drown out the noise of other campers. (9) If the bathrooms sewage is to be pumped up to the Wawona Treatment Center, which is already over capacity on the busiest days, first enlarge or increase it using the entrance fees or campground registration fees. The property owners in Wawona should not be negatively impacted by what the NPS wants to do in the Wawona Campground. They already pay a monthly fee. (10) The drawing I saw of the "Round Abouts" and "Pedestrian Underpasses' looked great and would help relieve the stop & go traffic at the intersections where pedestrians cross the main South & North Side roads. (11) People driving from Wawona area to Tioga have to drive half way into the Valley which just adds to extra miles and cars in the Valley. Make a road at the far west end paralleling the road that one uses when returning from Tioga to Wawona. I make this trip about a dozen times a year. It didn't use to be that way. (12) I vote to keep the Happy Isles Snack Stand. After a hike at that end of the park, (from Half Dome, Vernal or Nevada Falls, Panorama Trail), it is the only place one can get a cool during or ice cream snack. If it is a problem where currently located, move it closer to the Happy Isles Nature Center. (13) I vote to keep the Wawona, Valley & Tuolumne Stables. The Wawona Stables next to Pioneer History Center seems appropriate. My kids and now grandkids have grown up with memories of their annual stage coach rides with Ranger Burl telling them stories about horses and stagecoaches as modes of transportation for the pioneers. The ride is entertaining and has historical & educational value. (14) I vote to restore all the campground sites in the Valley. I vote for additional sites at the Upper & Lower River Campgrounds. (15) I recommend more shuttle service: Expand shuttle service to Glacier point, Wawona, Mariposa Grove. More frequent service between Wawona and the Valley: and earlier departure from Wawona and a later departure from the valley. Earlier start between Wawona & the Mariposa Grove. Expand Valley shuttle service to West end. (16) I vote to keep Housekeeping Camp at its current level. It is a great option for families and provides access to a protion of the river that is wonderful for swimming and rafting. Please retain all lodging as is at Housekeeping Camp. (17) I vote against adding the RV loop in a campground. RVs belong at the entrances of National Parks, not in them. The narrow, windy, mountain roads are not designed for them or commercial buses. The commercial buses pollute the air and cause traffic back-ups. The noise of the RV generators in a campground are so disruptive to the enjoyment of the Park for others.

Correspondence ID: 404 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hello, I participated in two of your workshops in San Francisco and appreciate all of the work involved in the several plans you presented. Since I found bits and pieces that I liked in several of the plans, I would like to give you my own, Plan J.

The traffic into the Valley should be regulated, not by turning the cars around once they have come up the road, but in El Portal (or perhaps Mariposa). If ther were a mulit story parking lot that was bear proof, had solar cell on top to power 24 hour lights, and had a climbing wall on the outside, people wolud use it. It could be placed near or over the sewage treatment plant to confine the ugliness, maybe have murals on the sides. There could be busses into the Valley that were properly powered, not by smelly diesel. A car or buss manufacturing company could develop these and get advertising, perhaps Chevron or another company could help, using some or their obscene profits for some good. The busses could be like Vistadome train cars, with clear roofs, which would encourage more people to ride them.

There would be better bus service to the lower valley to encourage people to spread out without cars, since parking would be

limited by closing the impromptu parking on the sides of the road.

No new camping places or parking lots in the valley and the old River campsites could have picnic areas.

The only river rafting and float tubing woud be on their own, and snags, etc., not be cleared.

The Housekeeping camp should be eliminated or reduced and cleaned up, new canvas would really help the looks of the place.

A traffic circle with underroad access would really help the problem intersection by the stores, with a properly marked parking lot. If the garage were moved out of the Valley, perhaps the great old building could be reused and not torn down.

The parking lot in the old apple orchard could also be better marked.

The bridges you propose to take out are a good idea for the river but the one between Camp Curry and the stores prehaps should be preserved to help traffic problems.

Do NOT add a campground near the Lodge but try to get the old parking lot next to the cafeteia back, moving the trailers out and putting the offices, etc., next to the Lodge in the back.

Yes, do remove the nonessential shops from the store area, people do not need to buy a lot of stuff that is for sale there.

The main point is that a lot of the year cars are not a problem, but when they are, they destroy the quality of everyone's experience in the Valley. With better bus service, and perhaps FREE service from outside, a lot of your problems would go away during those 100 days.

I hope this helps, keep up the good work,

Correspondence ID: 405 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 15:01:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: There is not one alternative that meets the stated goals for the plan. There are parts of all of the alternatives that address certain goals of the plan. In all of the alternatives, impacts are removed from one area of the river corridor and additional impacts are then added in other places on the Wild and Scenic river. This does not address the goals for the plan. A reduction of unnecessary services (tshirt shops, souveniers etc) in Yosemite Valley (why can?t these be sold in the outlying communities instead?) accompanied with a reduction of non park related conferences and special events (again these could be done in the outlying communities with a day visit to the park if desired).

Topic Question 2: I like the idea of day use permits and reservation system during peak summer season to avoid having the crazy traffic that summer brings. It may, unfortunately, be difficult to administer and regulate? not sure how that would work. I worry that this alternative reduces camping by too much and I don't think that housing should be built for 260 employees on the Merced River in El Portal!

Topic Question 3: This is my preferred alternative, but there are some aspects that I am not comfortable with - particularly the Concessionaire General Office being squeezed in to a small area in El Portal. My question here is - is that necessary?

I do prefer keeping employee beds in the valley if that is where they work rather than moving them to EP. This adds additional and unnecessary new development in the river corridor and more commuting up and down the river.

Topic Question 4: Let?s inform people of traffic information and that the park is full before they leave Mariposa so that we eliminate the need to build more parking in West Valley and El Portal as both would be close to the river. (same for concept 4 &5)

Topic Question 5: I don?t understand why we want to cram more people in to an already overcrowded and overly impactful experience.

Topic Question 6: I don?t understand why we would want to cram more people in to an already overcrowded and overly impactful experience.

Topic Question 7: Overall, if I had to choose one alternative, I would prefer Alternative Concept 2. However? From Concept 1, I like the idea of relocating the Concessioner General Office out of the river corridor. Everything that does not need to be in the park or EP should not be here. This moves offices out, housing for those employees in the river corridor becomes unnecessary and it reduces traffic along the river and in Yosemite Valley in the summer as well. I am happy to hear that other offices are

currently being relocated to Mariposa as well. Also, I think reducing somewhat the amount of day use visitors to Yosemite Valley in the summer is a good idea, but I am not so sure that we should reduce the number of overnight visitors as it does in Concept 2. Maybe a distinction should be made between day use visitors who arrive in their cars and those that arrive by bus (as these visitors bring significantly less impacts) I like the overall idea of increasing camp sites and decreasing hotel rooms. This lessens so many impacts for all of the infrastructure and personnel involved with hotel beds. Simple camping seems to be the best option for allowing more people to spend the night in Yosemite Valley.

Topic Question 8: Concepts 2 &3 (I?m confused about Concepts 3&4 which on the overview it says the office is relocated to EP, but on the actual Concept pages I can?t see where it is relocated in EP) put the Concessioner General Office in EP in what looks like the parking area right by the wetlands. First of all, we need that parking. It is often well used and necessary for the YARTS commuters going down to Mariposa and all Community Hall Events ? where will we replace that parking? If that building is built there, having offices and more people there would impact that wetland area. Also if the dripline around the Oaks are protected, we will already be losing parking in that area. A community consideration as well ? Currently the housing areas in El Portal are separated from most of the working areas which gives a good feel to the community layout ? this large work area right there would change that. Maybe when NPS moves many offices down to Mariposa, there would be room in the Warehouse complex to rent spaces to the essential Concessioner employees that need to be located up here and move the rest out of the river corridor. My greatest concern is with the ideas for Abbieville and the Trailer Village. I can in no way envision how housing up to 430 employees and putting in 200 parking spaces in that area would not create a huge negative impact on the river corridor in El Portal. Currently, the population of El Portal is stated at 635 on the sign. This would potentially more than double the population using this segment of the river corridor when the parking is full. As far as the remote parking in that area, I don?t see what purpose it serves at all. I can understand the idea of the convenience of driving into the park so that people have all of their ?things? with them. Parking in El Portal does not help them with that. They still need to leave their possessions that they don?t want to carry behind. Why, then, even have them drive to El Portal? If they need to leave these things behind, aren?t we creating more of a mess by allowing them to drive to El Portal from Mariposa? Why not just get on the shuttle in Mariposa? There is no logical reason for having that parking there. We just need to increase the ease, ability and affordability for folks to catch a shuttle straight from their lodging in Mariposa or Midpines, Cedar Lodge or Yosemite View Lodge. Maybe the park service or hotels (could they add a transportation tax to the bill?)just needs to subsidize or supply that service. Once people arrive at this new parking, there is nothing that people can do in the summer in El Portal from that spot BESIDES degrade the river. It is too hot to walk to the historic train or store (and even if it is not, think of the traffic accidents that would be caused by that volume of people walking along and crossing the highway in the summer. There are a lot of blind curves to watch out for in that stretch of highway!!) How will we protect the fragile areas on the banks of the river from all of these people trampling down to cool off on a hot summer day to the closest spots they can find? Will we be staffing El Portal with lots of Park Rangers to mitigate this situation? I can?t imagine the park having the resources to do that. It is foolish to assume that people will arrive at the remote parking, walk out of their cars and go straight over to stand in line for the shuttle that will bring them to Yosemite Valley. They will most likely get out and have a snack and no doubt they will leave trash behind in this process (some responsibly in the trash receptacles, and others in the river, parking area or the banks of the river). The relocation of large amounts of employee housing (the most reasonable number is in Alternative Concept #2 with 60 employees housed there) to El Portal, right on the banks of the river, also makes very little sense for numerous reasons. Moving employees who work daily in Yosemite Valley out of the Valley will create so much more traffic up and down that corridor every day in the summer when congestion is at its worst. It is better to have them stay in the Valley if there is existing housing there for them. If we continue to relocate unnecessary jobs/offices from the Valley to Mariposa, then we should have enough housing in the Valley to accommodate the needs and even be able to remove some. Maybe we need to gather some hard data on those numbers - how many beds will we really need up there once we pull out some of the jobs from the Valley? Are those numbers available somewhere? Again, having that many more people living in El Portal, right on the banks of the river, will, bottom line, have a very negative impact on the river. It would be very difficult to have people live there and then tell them that they can?t enjoy the river corridor, but, if they do, it will definitely have a negative impact.

Also, with that many people living there and biking/walking along the highway (the only way out), more accidents are bound to happen along the way.

Topic Question 9:

Bathrooms should be available somewhere easily accessible in El Portal for those using the river for recreation. The most obvious place would be at the store/gas station. This will help prevent people from improperly disposing of their human waste too close to the river.

Comments: Don't underestimate the power of education. Overnight users should be strongly advised to leave their vehicle parked at their campsite and use the public transportation once in Yosemite Valley.

Better shuttle services are key in all of this. We must be prepared to subsidize this somehow. Employees need options that work with the odd schedules that go along with working in the park. The current YARTS system, unfortunately, doesn't work with a lot of work schedules. Visitors need to feel like they have many options of when to arrive at and leave the park. Shuttles should have the capacity to carry bicycles so visitors or employees could take a shuttle up to the Valley and bike down or vice versa depending on their schedules.

Correspondence ID: 406 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 15:40:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 6: I applaud the National Park Service for is concern for the Yosemite National Park and others in the country.

Yosemite is, indeed, a special place and in need of consideration. John Muir had the foresight to want to protect Yosemite (and Hetch Hetchy) for the enjoyment of future generations. The uncontrolled growth of human population has put a sever strain on all of our natural resources and many have disappeared. But, again, Mr. Muir had it right that if more people were to have access to the inspiration of nature then more would appreciate it and want to protect it.

The plans put forth by the park service are ambitious and, for the most part, welcome and necessary. It is a difficult job to be able to satisfy all needs but it must be considered that those that offer the best opportunity to enjoy what nature offers with the least impact and greatest return are the most favorable. In review of your proposals I find that the suggestion of closing the Merced Lake High Camp is most objectionable and unreasonable. This is a camp, among the others, that offer a visitor what the valley floor cannot. It offers relatively pristine areas with a different recreation value than that of the valley floor. It offers a true ability for the public to access an unfettered exposure of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The ability to access and to enjoy the back country of Yosemite fosters the intangible commodity of appreciation and, thus, protection of the wilderness. Merced Lake camp is a hub and, certainly, a jewel in the network of the high sierra camps that allow visitors to access and develop an appreciation of nature. Those that wish to experience an absolute pristine experience are allowed wilderness areas. But those who need or prefer assistance in their attachment to nature are afforded this with the high sierra camps. It is my opinion that it is the unusual experience of these camps, and particularly Merced Lake, that are our hope for the preservation of nature?s beauty for future generations. The elimination or diminution of such areas are a strike against what the National Park Service strives to do; preserve our natural heritage and to see value in it.

[redacted]

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 407 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite West Homeowner Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 17:51:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I was able to attend the workshop in Wawona on 4 May 2012. I have had only a short period of time to review the material passed out at that meeting, so my comments will be brief. I am very concerned about the overcrowding of vehicles on the roads during peak visitation periods. Consequently, I am in favor of increasing parking and increasing camping in Yosemite Valley. I understand that this would impact the amount of area which would be restored. I am opposed to instituting day-use permits and a reservation system for park entry. This system would be incredibly frustrating for visitors and would be subject to abuse(secondary market for permits). I do like the overflow parking in El Portal and West Valley, especially if the Shuttle service is extended to these areas.

I have enjoyed walking along the trail which utilizes the Ahwahnee and Sugar Pine Bridges. I would miss loosing this access, but understand that this a key part to riverbank restoration. I could live with the loss of these bridges. My main concern about the removal of Stoneman Bridge is for visitor safety in case of an emergency evacuation; evacuation from Curry Village and the nearby campgrounds would create an incredible bottleneck at Sentinel Bridge which could be disasterous.

I have spoken with many visitors to the Park who tremendously enjoy the Wawona Golf Course and the Curry Village Ice Rink. I am opposed to removal of these facilities.

I am extremely disappointed that the NPS has not provided the public with an economic assessment of all the Alternatives, as well as a cost/benefit analysis for the gateway communities. I recommend that these studies be performed. I did not see any mention in the workbook about a time frame for accomplishing each Alternative; this would be useful information for evaluating these possibilities.

After reviewing the Preliminary Alternative Concepts Summary Comparison Table (P.26-27 in the Workbook), Alternative Concept 1 and 2 contain items that I could never support. Alternative Concepts 3, 4, and 5 are more appealing to me. Based upon the information provided to me, Alternative Concept 4 is probably closest to matching my concerns for the river and visitors' experience. I have a hard time comprehending how Alternative Concept 3 can increase camping facilities so much, yet decrease parking relative to the existing situation. I like the added picnic area (#10, p.23) in Alternative concept 4.

Correspondence ID: 408 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 9: I would like to direct your attention to a little known historic trail in the Wawona area. It is known as the Snaffle Bit Trail. The trailhead begins in North Wawona and heads east/northeast up the South Fork Merced River for about five miles where it ends at the river. The trail is best known by long-time Wawona residents, and was primarily used as a fishing trail. There is a blaze of a snaffle bit on a tree near the end of the trail. This trail has seen little or no maintenance in years, and it is now difficult to follow because of fallen trees and overgrown vegetation.

I would like to restore this trail so it can be used by backpackers and mounted riders. I am proposing the use of volunteer (Back Country Horseman of America) work to restore this old trail before it is lost forever. Please understand, I am not suggesting any new trail construction, only restoring the old trail.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 409 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 22:39:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Not quite. The entire issue of "User Capacity" has mostly been avoided. In the Slide Show PPT file the projected automobile levels for each alternative are compared to heavy automobile levels from the past, but there are no data to suggest that "User Capacities" have been determined. Moreover, the concept of user capacity must be more locally applied; i.e. there should be user capacity estimates for various activities within the corridor and those usage level goals should then be related back to the variables which the plan alternatives can control. For example, the plan should address the capacity of the Happy Isles-Nevada Falls corridor and show how usage on that corridor is related to automobile capacity and campground capacities within the valley.

Topic Question 2: Personally, I like Alternative Concept 1 in comparison to the other four, or the current conditions, because it is the only one of the five that makes a serious attempt to bring Merced River corridor usage down to reasonable levels, most consistent with my gut feelings about user capacities.

That said, however, I feel that Concept 1, like the whole package, is severely lacking in quantitative foundation. As I said, my choice is based on gut feelings. I'll go with that in the absence of any other bases, but I don't think that is satisfactory for an issue this important.

Specifically, I am in favor of maintaining the current elimination of the valley "River" campgrounds that were closed by the flood. While I am not hard-over on the elimination of any activity which is not Yosemite-unique, I do feel that when visitation pressure is as high as the current levels, tradeoffs are necessary. That means that I am in favor of the proposed elimination of the two golf courses, Ahwahnee and Wawona; the recreational stables, Curry and Wawona; Merced River commercial rafting; and the Curry village ice rink.

I would like to see a greater emphasis on non-automobile transportation. Adding bike racks to the Shuttle buses is long overdue. Increasing the frequency of Shuttle buses, especially in the late evenings, in order to make them convenient for the (evening) programs, might encourage less reliance on private automobiles. (Where is a transportation study/plan to support any transportation alternatives?) Instead of a Curry-based bike rental operation, what about a campground-based bike loaner/rental option?

Topic Question 3: I think that my comments under "Feedback on Alternative Concept 1" say it all. Concept 2 is "not much worse", but offers no advantage over Concept 1.

Topic Question 4: Concept 3 is a significant step in the wrong direction with respect to adding more valley campsites without any supporting justification relating campsite use to user capacities of valley activities and impact on the river values.

Topic Question 5: Concept 4 is a mixed bag of some increase/some decrease, but largely just a variation on the current visitation. If this were acceptable we wouldn't be in the third iteration of the MRP/W&SR activity. Let's be serious, the Merced River and its Yosemite corridor needs a plan, not a sidestep.

Topic Question 6: Concept 5 must have been thrown in to make the others look better by comparison. It is a significant step in the wrong direction.

Topic Question 7: I prefer Alternative Concept 1, of the five alternatives presented here.

Topic Question 8: My overall concern is that the plan alternatives presented here are not "User Capacity Based" Other than the comparison between estimated vehicle visitation level and previous vehicle visitation level, there is no traceback from alternative concept to activity user capacities.

From my personal observations, visitors tend to create their own parking solutions if a YNP parking solution is not convenient. Even though this is usually illegal I don't believe that enforcement should be the first line of defense. I think that it is mandatory that there be YNP parking spaces adequate to the expected vehicle visitation levels. The Southside and Northside drives should not be considered as parking spaces.

Topic Question 9: I don't know about any other alternatives, but I think that the whole issue of transportation is critical for distributing visitors to activities; or alternatively, for relating vehicle visitation to activity user capacity. This needs to be addressed coherently.

Comments: One thing that disappoints me about this process is the seeming disconnect between the Yosemite planning team responsible for the Merced River W&SR planning process and the Yosemite Resource Science group which has been putting together the studies that are supposed to provide the foundation for the Wild & Scenic River Plan. There have been several studies, some of which are available on the YOSE Merced River Plan "Research" web site, and at least one "Science Behind the

MRP Process" workshop, there seems to be very little evidence of a connection in the exposition of the five Alternative Concepts. As I have commented, above, I would have expected to see some methodology and statistical estimates which relate vehicle visitation, campsites, and lodging room occupancies to usage of various activities and locations in the valley and Wawona. At the very least I expected to see the vehicle flow model used to make estimates of vehicle traffic under various transportation alternatives. For example, it is one thing to have a model that can reproduce, at some level, the traffic flow seen on a busy Memorial Day weekend. It is even more useful to be able to predict how that traffic flow might change if, for example, Northside Drive were made two-way or if one of the bridges were closed.

I am also disappointed that only some of the research studies had been made available before the Alternative Concepts were put out for public review. If the public does not have access to the study results then the public review is mostly a popularity poll. The rockfall study, for example, was presented at the AGU meeting in San Francisco in December 2011, but is still not available for public review. I am told that it is "almost approved."

I was unable to attend the recent presentation in Wawona, but was given some of the handout material by an attendee. I have not been able to find those materials listed on the YOSE MRP website which makes me wonder how much other material from other presentations might also be less than visible.

Correspondence ID: 410 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 23:53:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: I am supportive of land rehabilitation along the Merced River Watershed, however, I am still unclear of the extent of the existing problems. Issues are listed in a very generalized manner in the plan and are almost entirely for Yosemite Valley. I do understand the desire to make certain changes in Yosemite Valley, such as: improving free-flowing conditions of the river, restoring meadows, floodplains, and riverbanks from trampling and degradation, and improving hydrologic and geologic processes. These proposed changes should be formulated and implemented little by little, project by project. Some of the alternatives suggested are quite drastic. My biggest concern is that I still have yet to see specifics, details, or data about existing conditions. I would like to see data supporting the complete removal of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, as listed in plans 1 and 2, but so far I can't find anything. Maintaining water quality is also in the proposal, which shouldn't be a problem since the water quality throughout the corridor is high, and even exceptional, as stated in the plan. The plan includes actions that would be carried out, but fails to state why.

There is no doubt that the Merced River Watershed and its components provide for an array of biologically and geologically significant values. The park, and especially the high country, are unique in todays world, in that they are places where one can venture out across territory that perhaps few feet have ever traveled. Water is clean and naturally filtered, delicate and hardy plants alike survive alongside one another and fill the landscape with an array of biodiversity. In the high country, nature prevails.

In my experience working at Merced Lake High Sierra Camp for five summers, and also in many other various locations in the high country, I have gazed in wonder at a lot of wildlife and have spent many an hour discovering new and interesting varieties of plants. I can tell you first-hand that the impacts are seriously minimal. Every summer I continue to witness the wildlife that use the riparian zones: countless garter snakes, deer, osprey, herons, pika, dippers, bears, violets, fungi, and kingfishers. I have watched in amazement while the river and lake have risen 4 feet overnight due to heavy rains melting late snows. Let me tell you there is nothing that could stop this natural, and very powerful free- flowing process from happening. I have witnessed the transformation from new early summer growth to the seeding out of grasses along the lake, marshes drying in the summer sun, wildflowers moving through their phases to take advantage of the short season, birds raising young in willow trees, mosquitos hatching and dying. There is no doubt about it. Merced Lake wildlife is still thriving and water remains a driving force in the biological and geologic processes that occur there. I am not the only one to ever have been enriched by these experiences. Merced Lake is a place where many people have had experiences that will last them a lifetime and that they'll never forget. What we have up there is a very unique situation, where humans can witness nature in its purest form and get up close and personal with it. Most people have forgotten or have never known what that is like. If they don't have a place to experience it, how will they know? What will they compare to? What will they work towards if they haven't witnessed perfection?

For first-timers, long-visiting families, and employees alike, the high country is a place of great significance. If I said it was a place simply of beauty and purity, it would not be enough. It is a place that has stirred the soul of every person to have bathed in its sunlight, weathered its storms, or gazed at its endless night sky. How would I have made such a connection and learned so much about nature if I had not had the chance to live in the purest of environments? How do people come to cherish such places? They need to form a connection. Once a connection is formed, they will want to protect, appreciate, and respect it. That is how people begin to care. If they don't understand what clean water and raw nature are, they won't have the initiative to care. They need something to compare to. Yosemite is still a place for the public to visit and learn, and access to places such as Merced Lake High Sierra Camp will help people develop more interest in land stewardship and protection of natural resources in the future.

Correspondence ID: 411 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Wawona Area Property Owners Association Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09,2012 23:53:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the alternatives presented in the Preliinary Alternative Concepts Workbook. Given the late hour I will make my comments brief and reserve further comment until the Draft EIS is published and the NPS's preferred alternative identified.

It is my understanding that all of the alternatives posed (1 - 5) meet the criteria of protecting the Merced River Corridor's outstandingly remarkable values (ORV's). That being the case, it is unfortunate that the focus of the alternatives under consideration, apart from Alternative 5, is to remove visitor lodging (hotel and camping) and recreation facilities for the sake of returning more of the Valley to a natural state than is necessary to achieve the primary objective of the Plan. By definition Yosemite is a public park. While its natural beauty merits being preserved, so do its historic and cultural lodging and recreational features. Certain if not most of the alternatives would remove overnight accommodations, river raft rentals, bicycle rentals, the ice skating rink etc. At the same time, being a Park, Yosemite is to be enjoyed by the public. Parks, by definition provide a variety of types of recreation. In very few places can the beauty of Yosemite Valley be enjoyed more than from a raft or a bicycle. In a time when an objective is to get the cars off the road it seems incongruous to also preclude renting bicycles. As for removing the ice skating rink, my question is why? It has no negative impact on the river and yet over years has provided thousands if not millions of families with the exhilirating experience of ice skating under a majestic view of Half Dome. These are experiences that Park visitors remember for the rest of their lives and share with grandchildren. Eliminating these attractions provide no great environmental benefit while destroying great sources of enjoyment in a one of a kind setting.

As applies to Wawona, the majority of the concepts presented have merit, however it is unfortunate to note that both alternative concepts 1 and 2 would remove the Wawona Golf Course, for which there is no legitimate justification, and all concepts would significantly reduce the number of campsites in the Wawona campground.

There is no legitimate reason to remove the Wawona Golf Course to return it to its "natural condition." First, the golf course was improved and operational before the Park was expanded south to include the Mariposa Grove and should rightfully be considered an historically significant feature. From an environmental impact on the river perspective it acts as a bio-filtration field that cleans rainwater runoff before entering the river so there is only a positive impact in that regard. Second, the question arises as to what its designated "natural condition" would be. Would it be restored as a meadow, which was the product of native american burning, or would it be planted as forest? Third, it provides a beautiful scenic backdrop to the historic Wawona Hotel complex and a recreational feature that has been enjoyed by thousands over the years and while providing no negative impact to the river actually provides an environmental benifit of cleaning water before it gets there.

Alternative 5, which allows some increase to in peak visitor use deserves the most consideration, however ways to accommodate the additional parking by spreading it out in different places in the Valley rather than remote sites outside the valley should be further explored. Prior to the 1997 flood the Valley accommodated more vehicles and lodging and the infrastructure functioned with a perception of less crowding than today. The big issue is cars circling without a place to park. That means more air pollution. Recognizing the issues associated with providing structures in the 100 year flood plain and safeguards to be taken in rock slide sensitive areas, it remains appropriate to explore ways to provide more lodging facilities (especially camping) and the parking that should go with it.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I look forward to the upcoming Draft EIS this Fall.

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As pertains to Wawona, Alternatives 1 and 2 would both remove the Wawona Golf Course and restore it to a naturalized consi

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Correspondence ID: 412 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 45044
Outside Organization: Yosemite Institute and WAPOA Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,10,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Fax
Correspondence: I am writing you to comment based upon Park Service staff presentation at Wawona on May 4, 2012 and the preliminary Alternative Concept Workbook. I do also expect a comment at later stages in this manner.

I have been a lifelong observer of Yosemite National Park. My family has owned a cabin in Wawona since 1929, before Wawona was even part of the park, and I have spent some time there almost every year in my almost 67 year life. I worked for Yosemite Park and Curry Company during summers, at Christmas vacation and one spring during my college years. I served on the local board for Yosemite Institute from 1994 to 2005 and on the WAPOA board for 12 years commencing in 1997.

My first thought about the approach ithat is being taken is as an attorney, wondering how you are going to get meaningful figures for User Capacity in Yosemite Valley without determining what employee housing there is to be in Yosemite Valley. Park Service and Delaware North employees and their families make serious use of Yosemite Valley year round. I think that in the inevitable lawsuit this will cause you problems.

Another concern I have is fairness, particularly for campers. You should really be looking at the number of campground spaces that existed both in Yosemite Valley and the rest of the park prior to the 1997 flood, the historical usage, rather than taking advantage of cirumstances since that time to consider certain decisions alraedy made even though they have not been addressed in any plan that has been ultimately upheld. To do otherwise to fail to bring home the real loss being suffered by campers. There are similar problems with elimination of most lower cost lodging units in Yosemite Valley. Being able to stay overnight in Yosemite Valley is becoming more and more an elitist experience, by which people who can afford it will be able to buy both overnight spots and even entry to Yosemite Valley.

It seems to me that your whole approach is skewed in favor of certain users. An example is no reference to camp 4 anywhere in the materials I examined. If user capacity is to be limited, how many people are to be allowed to maintain continuous residence there, and is that facility to suffer number reductions just like other campers. Climbers do in fact have a large impact on need for rescue services as well. If there is serious contemplation of increase of number of spaces for backpackers at the end of the valley, that is also a concern. It seems inappropriate to increase numbers there while taking one High Sierra Camp away from people who do want that experience who are not able to backpack.

I recognize that there isn't enough of the few square miles of Yosemite Valley to satisfy everyone. This has already started to cause friction between competing interests, each of which would want some usage that would conflict with the interest of others. It is not as understandable, however, when one interest makes a point of out of opposing uses that don't compete with their own interests. In particular there has for a long time been opposition to tennis and golf in the park, there does not seem to be any similar justification for removal of the tennis court. The tennis court at the Ahwahnee takes up only a small area, would be costly to remove, and would not seem to advance any realistic goals of anyone that would better their park experience. It offers recreational opportunities to hotel guests as well as to others. If this is to be removed, why doesn't this plan consider removing other recreational opportunities in the park as well, including the full range of recreation opportunities offered to employees. I would suggest that the visitor experience in Yosemite Valley is much more likely to be impaired by drug and alcohol consumption in the park, traditionally involving large numbers of employees and park guests, and this is not addressed in the River Plan.

The suggestions that the tennis court and golf course be removed at Wawona are even more inappropriate. There is much less competition for land use in the Wawona area. The golf course was built during World War I, 15 years before it became part of the park, and is an integral part of the charm and beauty of the Wawona Hotel area. The golf course may well qualify for protection given the presence in the sand trap next to the green on the 6th hole of evidence that it was the location of Galen Clark's 1857 homestead, particularly of his cabin. Further, it has apparently been determined from what we were informed at the May 4 meeting that the condition of the South Fork of the Merced River as it goes past the golf course is not impaired by the golf course, and that it is consistent with recreational use in the area. To remove the golf course would harm the hotel operation, and it seems unlikely what is so-called return to nature here would be subordinated to the numerous projects contemplated for Yosemite Valley and other parts of the park. The tennis court at the Wawona Hotel takes up a small space between the hotel and the store which provides a little separation between those two areas. If it were removed, at most it might furnish 3 or 4 parking spaces and wouldn't seem to have any other realistic use. It makes no sense for the Wawona golf course and tennis court removal issues even to be considered in the river plan.

I am concerned that the Wawona campground not suffer large reductions in campground space. Though Camp Leonard Wood may have some significance in park history, that could be better done without the loss of campground space, perhaps by rejuvenating and expanding the Pioneer History Center in Wawona. The Pioneer History Center is not at present kept up to its prior standards and it seems unlikely that a stand-alone monument to one important aspect of park history would get even that much care and funding over the long term.

My personal view of the Alternative Conepts for Yosemite Valley is that for the most part Concept 4 would be the most desirable of the 5 choices, though there may be a couple of things in Concept 5 that I would prefer.