National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Yosemite National Park Merced River Comprehensive Management Plan

Public Comments from Planning Workbook

January, 2012

National Park Service

Summary

During the public comment period for the Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook, we received 245 distinct public correspondences (see the full breakdown of correspondences by organization type below). Park planners reviewed the comments thoroughly and incorporated feedback received into draft alternatives for the Preliminary Draft Alternatives Concept Workbook.

To fulfill, in part, our duty of an open and transparent planning process, the following pages include every distinct correspondence received during the public comment period. Unaffiliated individuals have had their identifying information redacted to protect their privacy. We hope this information is of benefit to you, and we look forward to your continued involvement during the formation of the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan.

Organization Type	**Number of Correspondences**
Business	2
County Government	3
Federal Government	1
Conservation/Preservation	5
Recreational Groups	6
Non-Governmental	2
Non-NPS Employee in the Park	1
Unaffiliated Individual	225
Total	**245**

Correspondence ID: 1 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Oct,26,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: PARK-N-RIDE.. traffice is out of control in the summer in the park

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Correspondence ID: 2 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Oct,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Ecological and Natural Resource Values: - Be more aggressive at managing human access - install (contextual) barriers and signage to keep people on trails and prevent desire lines from developing. - Recycle grey water in all facilities for use in toilet flushing, plant watering, etc. Use waterless composting toilets whenever feasible. - Reduce impervious surfaces. Evaluate whether existing paved surfaces (paths/roads/parking lots) must remain so. If so, replace regular asphalt/concrete with permeable asphalt/concrete/pavers unless there are specific characteristics that make this infeasible.

Direct Connection to River Values: - After selecting which riverbank sites are best/worst for human access, the Park should more aggressively guide visitors through clear wayfinding signage and contextually appropriate barriers.

Visitor Use Management: - The most important issue is limiting/managing vehicle traffic in the Valley. The only way to accomplish this without banning vehicles entirely is to end free parking in the Valley. The Park must decide how many vehicles should be allowed in the Valley and adopt a policy of setting parking rates in a way that seeks to achieve that level. If there are too many vehicles entering the Valley, rates should go up; lower demand = lower rates. A variable pricing structure would also encourage more people to visit outside of peak periods. Fees should apply to any vehicle traveling east of Bridalveil Creek. Visitors not wishing to pay the fee could park at satellite lots in less congested/sensitive areas with frequent shuttle connections to the valley. For a pricing management system to be most successful, the cost of parking should be unbundled from the cost of accommodation in the Valley. By offering a lower price for visitors who leave their cars in satellite lots, this system would also provide a way to keep lodging affordable for all. Ideally, the Park would set parking fees high enough that it could remove existing parking supply (ie, impermeable surfaces that direct pollution into the River and hinder stormwater management) in the Valley.

Correspondence ID: 3 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Oct,15,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Thank you for taking my comments on this planning process. I am not sure that I will be able to attend one of the planning meetings so I am submitting my comments via email instead.

Technical note, there seems to be no easy way to electronically submit workbook feedback because: The link to submit comments online at http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/mrp.htm is missing. Submitting the workbook pdf file is not possible as the editable version of the workbook is not savable.

Therefore I am retyping my comments from the workbook in a somewhat abbreviated format.

Page 27. Visitors use management program - Parking. Please do not expand the parking lots. Mandatory remote parking and shuttles would greatly reduce the traffic and parking congestion in the valley. Exceptions should be made for overnight use and of course disabled visitors. Special parking permits seem overly complicated, showing a lodging or camping reservation at the entrance would suffice.

Page 28. Segment 2. Yosemite Valley. Very excited to see many new options for campgrounds in Yosemite Valley! Explore them all and pick the ones with least environmental impact. Keep the campgrounds a bit away from the river and provide access points so that the river can both be enjoyed and protected. With new campgrounds being set up and existing ones being moved away from the river it makes sense to also make some other needed changes. Separate the campgrounds depending on use and services provided! Something like this: RV campground. Road loop easily accessible with a larger vehicle, larger parking pad, dump station, etc. Car campground. Much like the sites today with a parking pad, picnic table, firepit. Have sites of different sizes, eg one car, two car, group. Walk-in tent campground. With a central parking lot and a short distance to walk. These sites do not need road loops, saving on space and expense yet providing a more pleasant tent camping experience. Backpackers campground with no associated parking as the campers have either hiked or bussed it in to the valley. These sites can be completely away from the road with just hiking trails for access. With all of these types of campgrounds there could be special sites for larger groups so that scouts or family gatherings could have a nice spot that is somewhat separated from the rest of the campground.

Page 28. Merced River above Nevada Fall. Consider closing the Merced High Sierra Camp. It would reduce both trail crowding and stock use.

Warm Regards,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 4 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,02,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?] There are too many cars already, NO MORE!! Leave cars out of the park and bring in the visitors by shuttle, like it used to be!

[Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?] YES! There need to be more buses and less cars. When I was a child, cars were not allowed, only shuttle buses drove along the Valley Floor from Camp 4 to Mirror Lake.

[Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not?] Yes, the vehicle traffic has to be reduced, as well as the pollution that cars create.

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] Yes, there are too many people in the park during the summer months, visitors should be limited. I fear though that reservations will be made illegally and resold on the black market as they have been for the Half Dome permits and campsites!!

[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?] I would be afraid that people would buy permits then not show up, thereby disallowing entry for those who want it. IF there were no shows, additional cars should be let in.

[What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities?] Rafting, swimming and fishing.

[How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation?] There are too few campsites. Overnight accommodations (Lodge, Curry, Ahwahnee) are too expensive for families, so camping needs to be increased. It also requires much lower maintenance than a hotel.

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Restore campsites taken out of circulation after the floods and install electrical hookups. This would provide a clean energy source rather than RV generators and there would be no noise.

[What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor?] Campsites need electrical hookups!! This would provide a clean energy source rather than RV generators that run on gasoline and there would be no noise.

[How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley?] Too many hands in the pot. Restore the mgmt back to the NPS. Get rid of DNC-they are too unorganized and very expensive.

[How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met?] Limit day use and vehicular traffic. Bring back the shuttles that used to operate on the Valley Floor. Restore accommodations with kitchens so people prepare their own food and don't need to eat in public eateries.

[Visitor Use Management Program How do we manage visitor use in a way that balance opportunities for high quality, resource-related experiences in the river corridor with the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural river values today and into the future?] As a regular visitor to Yosemite Nat't Park, I am saddended to see how it has changed over the years. There was a time when cars were limited, open air shuttle buses were the mode of transit from one end of the Valley Floor to the other, and people truly enjoyed the magic of Yosemite. Sadly, it is now so commercial, the overnight accommodations are SO expensive, it's no longer a national park that families can enjoy and afford.

[Your Vision Is there a theme or a commonality among your choices? Can your suggestions be implemented? Are they realistic and feasible?] I would love to see more campsites in the park. Camping is affordable for families and it's clean! If there were electrical hookups in the campgrounds, one would not have to wake up to the sounds of generators and the smell of gasoline! Electricity is quiet and clean..... Yosemite is a treasure that needs to be preserved.

Correspondence ID: 5 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,03,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [Please list the top management options you selected for each river segment. If there are actions you would add or actions you are not in favor of, please note them. When making your choices, think about whether the options work together and if there is a theme or commonality among them.] [Yosemite Valley] Yosemite Guide: Intensive education for day-hikers about human waste management - ie. burying it and packing out used TP. Hwy 120 YARTS bus. Summer day-use, hoel, bkpker bus transport to the

Valley from remote parking. Valley shuttle buses that do the whole loop all year long. Bulldoxe Housekeeping Camp. Restore the area. I'm embarrassed to drive by that thing ever time I'm in the Valley. Reinstall water and flush toilets back in the Backpackers Camp. Their removal was the one single worst thing that's happened in the Park lately. Reinstall the Valley Group Camp (high use, low impact). Remove old asphalt. More camping on the Tioga Rd. and leave it open to overnight parking longer to get people out of the Valley. Restore the Tenaya Lake Walk-in Camp to provide more camping opportunities outside Yos. Valley. Restore Hetch Hetchy to provide more camping opportunities outside Yos. Valley.

[El Portal] Yosemite Guide: Intensive education for day-hikers about human waste management - ie. burying it and packing out used TP. Remove the golf course. Bad for the river - fertilizer, compaction, not natural. Daily bus to and from Wawona, like the one that goes the opposite direction.

[Merced River Above Nevada Fall] Yosemite Guide: Intensive education for day-hikers about human waste management - ie. burying it and packing out used TP. Emerald Pool shore restoration and definitive trial beyond Vernal Fall.

[South Fork Merced River Wawona] Yosemite Guide: Intensive education for day-hikers about human waste management - ie. burying it and packing out used TP.

[Ecological and Natural Resource Values How do we promote the river's ability to shape the landscape, reduce impediments to free ?ow, improve geologic/hydrologic process, restore ?ood-plains and meadows, and protect water quality?] Boardwalks and bridges are great.

[Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values How do we support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, re?ection, and inspiration?] The Visitor Center, Yosemite Guide, ranger walks & evening programs do a good job.

[Visitor Use Management Program How do we manage visitor use in a way that balance opportunities for high quality, resource-related experiences in the river corridor with the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural river values today and into the future?] Electric or hybrid buses from remote parking spots like at Big Oak Flat into the Valley during peak season. Encourage off-season visitation instead of peak season visitation. Provide more access to the Tioga Rd area to get people out of the Valley.

[Land Uses and Associated Developments What structures and development are appropriate in the river corridorand support the protection and enhancement of river values?] Not golf courses or tennis courts or parking structures. Keep it as natural as possible with as little asphalt as possible. We got asphalt back home. Unobtrusive 2-story, maximum buildings Limited pavement Trails Drinking water Food purveyors like the ones already there Shops like those there Campgrounds. The River Campgrounds have recovered nicely. Unobtrusive hotels. Bathrooms

[Your Vision Is there a theme or a commonality among your choices? Can your suggestions be implemented? Are they realistic and feasible?] My vision: Keep it as natural as possible with ammenities to satisfy basic human needs. Education about proper sanitation whne toilets are not available. Manage the summer zoo with remote parking busing & day-use parking permits on summer weekends. Encourage people to explore other areas of the Park by increasing camping opportunities outside the Valley and providing morepublic transportation to Wawona and Tioga Rd and making Hetch Hetchy available. Encourage people to visit during off-peak times instead of peak times.

Correspondence ID: 6 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,03,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic functions?] Better manage river access points

[How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat?] more outreach and ecuation at "gates" by that I mean Mariposa, Fresno, Modesto, etc.

[Which areas are a high priority for ecologicla restoration?] Pedestrian walkways and campgrounds

[How can we conserve our limited water supply?] More administrative functions out of park

[What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality?] minimize vehicle use

[What measure should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ehtnographic resources?] More open and honest education - Indian Village sucks

[How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river?] Connect river to rest of state!! We live and work in a bubble. :(

[If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?] More road side parking. More turnouts. All over.

[Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?] Yes. YARTS is too slow. Need a lot fo busses to work.

[Would you support remote parking ans shuttle services? Why or why not?] Maybe. Train would be better. Who likes to ride on a bus?

[If day use vehicular access were limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] Yes. But locals (Californians) would have issues with this.

[Would you suport the use of a day use parking/vehicle permits? 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. better idea than the one above.

[What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities?] All types.

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensureing that river values are protected?] Facilities!!! BETTER FACILITIES!!!

[What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor?] Spend more money on toilets!!! Toilet cleaners!

[How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley?] Staff members that spend %75-%100 of work day indoors do not need park office space. Get them out of the park.

[How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met?] Better facilities. More camping. More roadside parking. Less DNC.

[Ecological and Natural Resource Values How do we promote the river's ability to shape the landscape, reduce impediments to free ?ow, improve geologic/hydrologic process, restore ?ood-plains and meadows, and protect water quality?] Encourage people to make good decisions by fostering trust with visitors.

[Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values How do we support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, re?ection, and inspiration?] The Merced is a long river. We should be more open about hwy "our" park of the river si "better" and the rest of it is "compromised". We look foolish when we are political and delicate.

[Visitor Use Management Program How do we manage visitor use in a way that balance opportunities for high quality, resource-related experiences in the river corridor with the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural river values today and into the future?] Educate people farter out (reach out into the state). Fun, museum like visitor centers in the cities like MOdesto, Fresno, San Jose, Oakland, Santa Ana, Redding, Reno. Our Island can't support the structures we need.

[Land Uses and Associated Developments What structures and development are appropriate in the river corridorand support the protection and enhancement of river values?] Too much DNC.Too much DNC.Too much DNC. Too much DNC. Store - too much, teddy bears - too much, Housekeeping, Lodge, Curry, High Sierra Camps, Ahwahnee, Wawona, Yosemite View, Cedar Lodge, Really? All that?

[Your Vision Is there a theme or a commonality among your choices? Can your suggestions be implemented? Are they realistic and feasible?] This whole thing is impossible. Good luck.

Correspondence ID: 7 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Yosemite NP Employee Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,04,2011 16:56:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are some of the issues/ommissions that I noticed in the Planning Workbook-

How come there is no mention of the parks histoirc orchards. The MRP could be a great vehicle to evaluate the orchards and to reach a decision on the treatment of the orchards moving forward. The overwhelming majority of the parks historic orchards are within the Merced Wild and Scenic River overlay, including the orchards in El Portal, Yosemite Valley and Wawona. Consideration should be given to addressing the future treatment of the orchards within the MRP. This conversation could be facilitated by reviewing Yosemite's Orchard Management Guidelines, completed in January of 2011.

The alternatives guidelines treats it as if it is a foregone conclusion that one or both of the historic Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee Bridges will be removed. I think the park should look closer at preserving these national register listed historic bridges. The last that I had heard, the hydrologic modeling was inconclusive if these bridges are really causing and problems to the hydrology of the Merced and that removing them may have little benifit.

Lastly, in treating and interpreting the Camp A.E. Wood historic site, consideration should be given to restoring the site's historic arboretum and trail (1904). In fact a feasibility study was funded by the Yosemite Fund within the last 5 years looking at restoring the historic arboretum and trail and the findings were that it could be done. The restoration of the arboretum should be explored in the MRP. The arboretum itself is likely historically significant as possibly the first attempt by national park caretakers (U.S. calvary at that time) at providing an interpretive display.

Correspondence ID: 8 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,07,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Read that Yosemite is asking the public's help with a strategy to balance access with strict protections of the park (8000 visitors a day and only 1100 parking spaces). You need some sort of mandatory shuttle bus system from April 15 to October 1. Of course, this requires creating a huge parking facility. The park may have to relocate its southern and western entrance booths so that drivers can pay the entrance fee, park their cars, and take the shuttle bus into the valley. Zion NP has a nice shuttle system in place. Check that out. Only people that have confirmed reservations at one of the lodging facilities inside the park (including campgrounds) may drive into the valley. A written confirmation indicating dates of stay can be presented at the entrance to the day parking facility to allow those cars to proceed into the valley. Contact the Walt Disney World people. They have the best shuttle bus system in the world. The buses must be able to arrive often enough and provide a wide combination of destinations. Bus stops will have to be created at all the major valley attractions. The biggest challenge is how and where to build the parking facility to hold thousands of cars a day without upsetting the beauty of the park. Hope I was helpful

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Correspondence ID: 9 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,13,2011 12:24:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I have read the worksbook and submit my comments in the comments box provided below.

more walkin campgrounds like camp 4. Create these campgrounds in locations that have already been disturbed and on the north side of the road, near the existing sewer line. Improve cap4 4, perhaps adding a basic shower and improving the bathrooms. Right now, many camp 4 folks just go poach a shower at housekeeping or curry. having a shower at camp4 would limit the driving required to poach that shower.

Do not cut down trees between road and el cap. Not sure I understand why this would be done other than to appease the car-using tourist looking to take photos without straying too far from the car.

Manage impacts in El Cap Meadow by adding a cairn to direct foot traffic onto the same trail. Right now it is difficult to decide where to walk into the meadow becuase there are so many options and no marker to point everyone in one direction. As a climber, nothing is more satisfying that the late afternoon relaxing in El Cap Meadow, staring up at the routes and climbers on the wall. Perhaps directing the "stop for quick photoshoot" folks to the west end of the meadow and onto a boardwalk would be beneficial to the meadows preservation as it would force the higher-impact user group onto a boardwalk.

Limit RVs and enforce generator/noise rules in drive in campgrounds such as the Pines. As a tent camper, nothing detracts more from my rustic exerience that trying to fall asleep next to an RV cranking the generator past quiet hours.

In general, I support the ideas set forth/endorsed by the Access Fund. It is through this group that I heard about this website and had the opportunity to meet with them to discuss thoughts and ideas. The valley is an amazing place to be preserved for future generations and should be made accessible to people from all walks of life. As it is currently, the limited camping options available make it difficult for someone like me, with limited disposable income, to secure a place to stay in the valley. I make the trek out in the wee hours of the morning and endure the long, cold morning wait, waiting for the camp 4 kiosk to open, fingers crossed, that I'll get a spot. More sites like camp 4 ensure that Yosemite does not become a park more welcoming of the elite and makes it possible for people like me and families that can't afford the lodge/awhanne, or do not have the foresight to plan/make reservations a year in advance.

Thank you for your consideration, and thank you for taking the time to open the floor to public comment. We all love the Valley and I am sure that with open and honest discussiion, we can make the park better for people, the nautral beauty of the park, and the animals that call the valley home.

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 10 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,08,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: Dear National Park Service,

I am writing to comment on your Merced River Plan process and workbook. Your recent email is so sophomoric and infuriating that I will not attend your workshops or fill in your ridiculous workbook. The basic premise of your planning process is entirely wrong. Your recent email (copy below) states: "The Merced River Plan must balance river protection with public use."

In fact, the word "balance" appears nowhere in the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. You totally made it up.

The Act requires you to preserve the river's free-flowing character, etc., not "balance" protection with public use. You're misleading the public, and you're misleading yourselves. You're starting fundamentally from the wrong place, asking leading questions, and seeking public comment to support your obvious bias in favor of non-conforming developments and activities.

Shame on you. Your process is a charade.

If you want me (and the rest of the conservation community) to engage, you need to renounce your mantra of "balance river protection with public use," and articulate what you are really supposed to be doing: preserve the river.

Correspondence ID: 11 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,09,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hi All,

I'll make this short and direct - I'm an avid hiker and love the Yosemite Valley. Please DO NOT create more roads, more access and more ways for people to visit that should not be there in the first place. The last thing we need out there is more automobiles and recreational vehicles. If anything, you should be coming up with plans to further limit access these noisy, stinky things that take away from the Valley's natural beauty.

"God has cared for these trees, saved them from drought, disease, avalanches, and a thousand tempests and floods. But he cannot save them from fools." John Muir

Thanks,

Correspondence ID: 12 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,09,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Below are my comments on the Merced River Plan. Unfortunately I have a commitment this evening which prevents me from attending the SF workshop. I will, however, prioritize the webinar. Thank you for having an additional opportunity for me to participate and for considering my comments.

I want to focus my comments on the question of access and use. I have been going to Yosemite since 1999. Recently I go, on average, once a month. I use the backcountry in all seasons, the Valley (Curry Village, the Lodge, camping), and Badger pass x-c skiing trails (they're fantastic, by the way). I think that NPS does a great job in may places dealing with the incredible volume and diversity of visitors. However, I think more attention should be paid to the issues of access and use.

Regarding access, the key question, I think, is what we are providing access to. Clearly we need to provide access to wilderness and nature for people who may be unable or unwilling to hike miles into the backcountry. However, in may places, like the Valley, where easier access is given, we seem to have lost site about exactly what kind of experience we are giving. I'm not sure it's worthwhile to provide greater access to a diminishing experience. The traffic jams, air pollution, and crowds in the Valley really take away from the experience. The bear problem, caused by humans, really degrades any type of experience with nature and gives thousands of people a completely false impression of Black Bears. This is a tough question, and I don't have answers, but I never hear people wondering about what it is we are providing access to in the first place.

The second question is use. Currently I pay the same to get in the park in my Honda Civic hatchback as somebody in a large RV. Even though I'm willing to walk a short distance and would take up 1/4 of the camping space of an RV, there are no sites designated for such use (though the Supervisor's Compendium seems to indicate the backpacker's campground is available for such use, the Rangers don't seem to agree) and my camping experience is severely degraded by generators. On my last trip I saw one of those tour-bus RVs parked sideways in several parking lots, with nobody visible. They were blocking the views of others to get a better view out their window without having to go outside. I understand that some people will need an RV to camp and aren't blessed with my physical health, and that's fine. But clearly many do not need such luxuries and are simply making choices. While providing access and respecting choice, NPS can and should differentiate between different uses. The fact is driving a large RV and using a generator in the park makes a much larger impact than driving a small car, camping, and riding the shuttles. At the end, NPS discriminates against users like me, who's experience is degraded because of the type of experience others have chosen to have.

I believe considering these issues will lead to better experiences and most importantly, a more sustainable and authentic experience for visitors and a healthier Valley.

Correspondence ID: 13 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,10,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hello, My name is [redacted] and I have visited the Park on numerous occasions over the last 60 years. I would like to comment on Park Planning as I feel the Park is too crowded and overused to the detriment of the resources. Please restrict access and raise fees for park entry and camping accommodations - at least double for everybody including seniors. Restrict day trips to bus entry and charge a per person fee including children of at least $20. Reservations should be required. All other stays in the Park should be by reservation with a large increase in fees. Reduce the number of units in Housekeeping Camp by 50% with special reference to those close to the Merced River. Eliminate the practice of dumping fire pit ashes, after the camp is closed, on the ground - runoff could be toxic. The Service has done an admirable job of improving the habitat over the last few years, but now it is time to seriously limit access to this treasure to preserve it. I would give preference to U. S. citizens first for reservations. You might come up with a carrying capacity figure , just as done with management of wildlife, only in this case, for humans. I am a retired marine biologist, and have experience with consumptive and non-consumptive use of natural resources. Thanks for listening and I would appreciate it if you could pass these thoughts on to your planning groups. I could not download the planning documents.

Correspondence ID: 14 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: EDC of Mariposa County Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,14,2011 14:51:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: I feel unqualified and insufficiently informed to make specific comments on individual items. I do have some general comments, however, which are provided below.

My main suggestion is to make this plan as defensible as possible against potential (likely?) litigation. One way to do that would be to create an alternative that is acceptable to the previous litigants. Having such an alternative (or at least the invitation to create one) would demonstrate that their views were considered. And if the previous litigants do propose an alternative, it would give others the opportunity to comment (showing the unreasonableness of such an alternative!).

My second comment also goes to the potential for litigation. Carrying capacity was a fundamental consideration in the previous case. Personally, I thought VERP was a good approach because capacity involves much more than just a number. It must involve not just how many people are in the park, but where they are at any point in time and what they are doing. Perhaps the previous litigants could suggest an approach in their alternative that would be satisfactory.

My third comment is to resurrect the previous Yosemite Lodge plan. The Lodge and its surrounding environment is currently an embarrassment, and the previous plan offered considerable improvements. The Lodge also seems to me to be the major development need within the Wild & Scenic River boundary, making it critically important to get this right. I believe the previous plan did just that.

Correspondence ID: 15 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,10,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hello, My name is [redacted] and I have visited the Park on numerous occasions over the last 60 years. I would like to comment on Park Planning as I feel the Park is too crowded and overused to the detriment of the resources. Please restrict access and raise fees for park entry and camping accommodations - at least double for everybody including seniors. Restrict day trips to bus entry and charge a per person fee including children of at least $20. Reservations should be required. All other stays in the Park should be by reservation with a large increase in fees. Reduce the number of units in Housekeeping Camp by 50% with special reference to those close to the Merced River. Eliminate the practice of dumping fire pit ashes, after the camp is closed, on the ground - runoff could be toxic. The Service has done an admirable job of improving the habitat over the last few years, but now it is time to seriously limit access to this treasure to preserve it. I would give preference to U. S. citizens first for reservations. You might come up with a carrying capacity figure , just as done with management of wildlife, only in this case, for humans. I am a retired marine biologist, and have experience with consumptive and non-consumptive use of natural resources. Thanks for listening and I would appreciate it if you could pass these thoughts on to your planning groups. I could not download the planning documents.

Correspondence ID: 16 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please consider the following recommendations: Decrease Wilderness permits between Little Yosemite Valley and Merced Lake to decrease overall use on the trail. Incorporate High Sierra Camp users into the trailhead quota count. Close or reduce down to 30 beds or less the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, which would remove or reduce a core development amidst wilderness. It would also reduce the need for stock needed to maintain the Camp. For the Merced Lake Backpackers Campground keep the Campground so that visitor use is concentrated, but lower quotas for trailheads that lead to the Merced Lake area. Retain the composting toilet to meet the need of concentrated camping and avoidance of resource pollution. Thank you

Correspondence ID: 17 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Yosemite Conservancy's John Muir Society and LeConte Society Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,13,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Process I realize that this is a Merced River Plan, but some of the issues raised in the workbook simply require broader thinking. For example, the desire for additional camping in the Valley really should be expanded to additional camping near the Valley, including Glacier Point Road, the western end of Tioga Road, and the stretch of Big Oak Flat Road north of the intersection with Tioga Road.

I do not think additional camping in the old Rivers area of the Valley is economically or ecologically sound. The River will flood, as it did this spring.

Additional camping in the Valley should not affect the meadows in any way.

Camping among scattered mature trees is desirable; any new Valley camp grounds should take that into account.

I am not sure how the park developed the suggested areas for future camp grounds, based on ground water, soil type, avoidance of fragile meadows and availability of shade. I favor more camping, if campgrounds are added, at Upper Pines Walk-in (point 9), near the Valley Stables, and perhaps in the western part of the Valley.

Remove all riparian zone campsites at all campgrounds and Housekeeping Camp. Additional stores and opportunities to purchase food would be required if campgrounds are added in the Valley. Their impacts would have to be carefully assessed.

More differentiation in types of new campgrounds in the Valley is desirable, rather than a mix of tents, campers, and rvs.

I do not think it is necessary or helpful to have designated pads on which tents must be pitched.

Additional camping along the Glacier Point Road, tents only, without support of shopping and eating, would be an attractive option for those who find the Valley too congested and too hot in the prime months of July and August. Possible camping locations on the west end of the Tioga Road or along the stretch of Big Oak Flat Road should also be explored. In addition to expanded camping, lodging, shopping and dining in El Portal, I am in favor of shuttle buses into the Valley for day use in the prime summer months. I would use them, especially if they started very early in the morning. However, working out the entrance fees for such visitors will take some thought. Certainly, a party that would have arrived by car should not have to pay more than the $20 they would have paid for a week's entrance to the Park. In fact, it might be a good idea to have them pay less. For cars that would have had fewer than 4 occupants, perhaps they could pay $ 5 each? Can we expect people to be mostly honest about this?

Parking in the Valley for people staying there or elsewhere in the Park I am assuming that anyone who has a reservation for camping or lodging in the Valley will be allowed to park at their lodging for the nights they are staying and the day they check out. I recommend that people staying in the Valley tonight also have a space in Valley day parking today. It would be burdensome to have to leave my car at El Portal, come in on a shuttle to day hike, take the shuttle back out, and then drive in to check in for tonight. What about shuttle buses or day use parking in the Valley for those camping or staying elsewhere in the Park? Such as Bridalveil Creek, Crane Flat, Wawona, among others?

Zion Canyon experience The shuttles-only in Zion Canyon from April 1 to October 1 with the sole exception of those staying at Zion Lodge works well, in my experience. However, the campgrounds in that part of the park are right at the entrance, and the trailheads are all a very short walk from the shuttle stops. I sometimes parked in the lot near the Zion Canyon entrance and parked in the town of Springdale and took the shuttle up to the park entrance, walked into the park, and switched immediately to the up-canyon shuttle.

However, Zion Canyon has a lot less visitors, even on a crowded day, than Yosemite! In general, I favor controlled access to the river bank rather than no access. I think people will get down to the river even if the park attempts to prevent access.

Getting into the Valley on crowded days When the Valley is "at capacity" under current management plans, people with reservations to camp or stay in the Valley should not have to wait behind a long line of people hoping for dya use parking who are going to be turned away!

Reservations for Valley Day use parking There are lessons to be learned from the Half Dome permit system this year, where permits disappeared within a few minutes on the 1st of the month and then many of them never got used.Having some "reserve the day before" or first-come, first-served every day would be helpful.

I am in favor of as natural a riverbank as possible, and for eventually reconstructing the bridges that restrict flow.

Cathedral Picnic Area and El Capitan The reason there is a distinct informal trail along the riverbank heading up river is that

many people park at Cathedral Picnic Area and then walk through the woods to take photos of El Capitan. I suggest the park create a trail from the Southside Drive rather than along the riverbank, to the signature vista point. Name it after Ansel Adams or someone who took classic photos from there. The views of El Cap and the Three Brothers from the obvious view point are a Yosemite Classic, and lots of people will go there no matter what you do!. Merced River and the back country I think concentrating backpackers at popular locations such as Little Yosemite Valley and near Merced Lake, and providing state-of-the-art solar composting toilets and bear lockers, is a much better option than allowing limited dispersed camping in those locations.

There are questions about the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, the associated backpackers' camp, and trail use in this area.

I support capping the occupancy at Merced Lake High Sierra Camp based on the capacity of Vogelsang and Sunrise. Perhaps the extra tents could still be put up and used for storage of nonperishable food supplies, paper plates, utensils, etc., and firewood for campfires, thus reducing some of the mule pack train traffic. However, I find having hot meals morning and evening an important part of the High Sierra camp experience.

A comprehensive assessment and plan for the High Sierra Camps is needed.

I support state-of-the-art solar composting toilets at all High Sierra Camps, and that showers not be available to hikers at any of the camps.

I think saddle trips for the High Sierra Camps should be replaced by mule-supported hikes, where the participants hike from camp to camp, either with an interpretive ranger or on their own, but got to send a significant chunk of their stuff on a mule from trailhead to camp and from camp to camp. I think that would cut down on the mule traffic, their damage to the trails, and the obvious evidence of their passing we encounter as hikers.

Saddle day trips from the Tuolumne Stables and the Valley Stables should be reduced or eliminated. There is having to step aside for the stock to pass, damage to the trails, and again, that wonderful evidence of their passing.

Correspondence ID: 18 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,16,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: My suggestions for implementing the Merced River Plan:

1. Remove most of the improvements in the Valley to an area outside the valley. 2. A Common Area, possibliy in Foresta, would be developed outside the Valley that would have all the commercial enterprises that are currently in teh valley such as restuarants, shops, grocery stores, Hotel/motel lodging, RV camping and employee housing. 2. Car camping would be allowed in the existing campgrounds (and additional camping might be built). Campters would leave their cars outside the valley in the Common Area. Campers would load their camping equipment in large boxes taht would be shuttled to a campground entrance where they would be off loaded onto carts. The campers would take the carts to their campsites. All RVs would camp in a campground in the Common Area or campgroudns outside the Valley. 4. Remove all Hotel/Motel lodging to the Common Area. The Ahwahnee hotel would either be abandoned and left to decay gracefully or moved to the Common Area or another area outside the Valley. 5. All utilities would be removed from teh Valley. All toliets would be pit (much better for the environment). All water would be carried in by users. No electricity would be needed. 6. No private vehicles would be allowed in the Valley but a comprehensive shuttle service would be available. 7. Additional trails would be developed to interesting sights to disperse people. 8. Bicycle trails would be developed to encourage people to get around the valley by bicycle. One possibility would be a trail that goes all the way around the valley staying as close to the escarpments as possible. 9. The following doesn't have anything to do with the Merced River Plan but I will include it anyway. The cables on Half Dome are so backed up because the walking surface is difficult to use. Currenlty there are 2x4 boards approximately every 10' (as I recall) and this makes it scary for some to go up. If the boards were placed every 18 inches I think access would be much eaisier and people would move quicker.

Thank you

Correspondence ID: 19 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,17,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function?] please do not use herbicide to remove non-natives along the river.

[What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality?] Compost toilets at El Cap.

[What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources?] Rehabilitate the Old School House in Old El Portal before there is further deterioration of this histroic structre. Ensure historic use; it should no ALL be office space.

[If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?] BIKES!! Institute free bike program, complete with bike stations throughout Valley w/ ample free bikes and kid trailers. More bike lanes. Set it up for BIKES and decrease car use.

[Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?] Yes, only if they are hybrid and coupled with MANDATED remove parking outside the park. I think ALL private sector buses should be hybrid. Current noise pollution from tour busses is UNACCEPTIBLE.

[Would you wupport remote parking and shuttle servies? Why or why not?] Yes. The current traffic levels in the park are unacceptable for resources and visitor experience.

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? Yes. I belive we need to CLOSE THE GATES when numbers are too hight! They were too high MANY days this summer.

[Would you support the use of day use parking/vehicle permit? Does this mean 1) Would you use a day use parking/vehicle permite? OR 2) Would you spport a day use parking/vehicle permite system?] Don't understand the question.

[How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met?] If temporary structures are necessary, please make them aesthetic at the onset...we have learned that temporary structures stay a LONG time...and historically they are UGLY. Same with construction, orange flagging and tape. This has become a sad part of visitor experience. Value BEAUTY every step of the way.

[Yosemite Valley] -Implement free bike program. Make it very bike friendly and free to visitors. -Continue to allow people on El Cap Meadow, perhaps in conjunction w/ a boardwalk and viewing platform.

[El Portal] -Support, encourage, and maintain a healthy community in El Portal. Components of this include: **Restore Old School House to provide an aesthetic, inspiring, secluded meeting place/classroom **Keep dorm style housing OUT of Old EP. This population historically has not mixed well with a multi-generational community and would change the community feel in EP for the worse. It is documented that this [kind of] population has higher crime reate, drug and alcohol use. **Renovate EP Community Hall **Now that ORVs have been established for EP, lift the building moritorium in Old EP immediately. This will provide much needed housing for NPS and make people happy --- not to be undervalued! Happy people = productive employees! **Allow a cafe in EP **Support community garding.

Maintain the possiblity for a spacious, peaceful experience for visitors (the antithesis of the traffice jams experienced by MANY this summer and beyond).

Increase gate fee to fund Free-Bike program.

Implement higher pricing for private vehicles, FOREIGNERS, R.V (they take up more parking space...big NPS cost). Similiar to construction during bird nesting season, NPS should limit loud vehicle traffic. LOUD MOTORCYCLES and LOUD TOUR BUSSES should be restricted when waterfalls/river is low becasue of noise pollution.

What is the relationship b/t TRP and MRP? If visitors are going to be displaced from Tuolumne into YV, how will they be managed? Visitors need to be managed parkwide, not just by river corridor, so that a quality visitor experience is ensured.

Determine capacity and then USE THE MEDIA to discourage the publoic from visiting during times when visitation exceeds this #. Implement reservation system. CLOSE THE GATES when need be.

I believe we are at the point where we need to shift our paradigm in YV from private vehicles and consider primary bike traffic, or ligh-rail during peak season.

Also, private sector buses should ALL be hybrid to decrease NOISE pollution and air pollution.

Thank you to NPS employees! The planning meeting in EP was exceptionally well organized and presented and I felt audience participation was sincerely encourage.

Correspondence ID: 20 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,16,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources?] Barrier fencing where needed.

[If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be

appropriate?] Only at new campgrounds, use more "Camp 4"model to minimize pavement.

[Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them?] Yes! I would use them if: 1) Hours were appropraite (6AM-10PM) 2) Stops at expanded areas in park like cookie cliff, reeds, etc.

[Would you support remote parking and shuttle services?] I think these should be mandatory for visitors staying at the Lodge, the Ahwahnee and the tent cabins, and for day use OR add a vehical surcharge for these users. Csampers are the only users who need to carry in large loads to the park. Obviously, handicap use would be exempt.

[How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation?] See above re: shuttle expansion, staging areas.

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Per square foot, Camp 4 "model" provides best efficiency. However, the "walk-in" exp. in the valley should be improved with better picnic tables areas, and shower facilities nearby.

[How can we conserve our limited water supply?] More composting toilets, towel use programs at lodge and hotel, remove swimming pool and ice rink.

[How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river?] More boardwalks and designated access points.

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] No. Reservation systems are always a mess.

[Would you support the use of 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?] Both. If the shuttle system was not expanded, I would pay extra for a day use permit.

[What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to suport these recreation opportunities?] Why commercial rafting?

[Ecological and Natural Resource Values] -Minimize car traffic and new paving. -Eliminate commercial rafting to reduce river "safety" concerns. Use by private citizens would be at their own risk, as with reiver play, hiking, biking, and rock-climbing. -Eliminate stables and recreational horses. -Reduce stock mules by adding "sherpa" options.

[Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values] Develop several education loop trails in trailside placard displays of info about native american histories, geology, biology, etc. Make sure some trails are handicap w/ judicial use of boardwalk, etc.

[Visitor Use Mangement Program] -Encourage less car use by expanding bus shuttle system from 120 & 140 entrance areas. Create day use staging areas at these locations. Consider more user friendly hours (6AM-10PM). Consider 'call button' stations at bus stops to prevent useless circuits of busses during low use hours. -ONLY add more parking at new campgrounds. Do not encourage/allow for expantion of day use vehicles.

[Land Uses and Assocaited Developments] -Restoration of trampled areas over time through a temp. program of fencing and add. of boardwalks in visitor use areas.

Yose Valley should be more of a national treasure resource and less of a "resort" destination. What makes Yos. Valley so special is scenic beauty of walls, meadows, river. Commercial rafting, swimming pool, ice skating rink have no place in a Natl. park. Support enhanced access for ALL citizens = more camping, and encrouage walkiong, hiking, nature and history guided walks and talks, rier play, quite relaxations and contemplation.

A special note: Although this comment is not specific to the River Plan, one of THE MOST UNIQUE qualities of Yosemite Vally is the rock-climbing use. Yos. Valley is probably among the top 5 rock climbing destinations in the WORLD. the use of the Valley should be optimized for those qualities for which it is unique and outstanding. Besides climbing, this is its scenic beauty. Fewer cars and more camping would enhance both of these unique and outstanding Valley opportunities.

Correspondence ID: 21 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Yosemite Conservancy Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,20,2011 16:28:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I forgot one item when I mailed in my comments and that is: When driving from the Wawona area to Tioga Road, one has to drive partially through the Valley before being able to cross over. It would be better if we could crossover immediately on the same road as when one is returning from Tioga toward Wawona. The current configuration just adds unnessary cars in Yosemite Valley. I think previously that was the designated route.

Correspondence ID: 22 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,23,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: I don't agree with paddling and floating being allowed from the swinging bridge through Wawona proper. There are many property owners along the river who do not want this traffic through their property.

Signs by the Park Service need to be put up to show visitors boundaries between private property land and Park Service land.

Correspondence ID: 23 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center Conservation/Preservation
Received: Nov,17,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: RE: CSERC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MERCED RIVER PLAN PLANNING WORKBOOK: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Dear Don and planning staff:

The following comments are submitted on behalf of our staff and members. We have considered the information that was provided through the public meeting discussions (which were well facilitated and helpful). We considered information based on numerous field visits to the Valley in particular to look at some of the sites. We considered comments that we heard from various representatives of interest groups at the public session held on November 7th in the Park. Finally, we also have reviewed our previous comments and notes taken from a number of Merced River public sessions over the many years of our engagement in this planning effort.

The most essential message that we are sharing with these comments is this:

There are inarguably a wide range of reasonable and historically important demands on the Merced River and its corridor due to the world-renowned status of Yosemite Valley and the river system. Yosemite Gateway Partners represent just a fraction of the business and political interests that want the highest possible visitation that can be squeezed in while meeting legal mandates. One-time visitors to Yosemite Park and Yosemite Valley are generally so excited and thrilled to see the magnificent scenic vistas and river corridor that they will generally accept high levels of crowding, more traffic than is desirable, less protection for aquatic resources, and more manipulation of the ecosystem.

However, in order to meet the clear intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and to protect and enhance Outstandingly Remarkable Values, CSERC believes that the Park Service must legally and responsibly err on the side of protection wherever and whenever there are conflicts or trade-offs between use and protection. Using "camping in the Valley" as an example, it may be politically expedient for the Park to propose additional campground locations or camping sites in the Valley within the Wild and Scenic River corridor because certain interest groups are advocating for more camping. With the river corridor already stressed from the two main roads, all the vehicle traffic, foot traffic, human noise and disturbance of wildlife, and from all the pollution already caused by campfires, barbeques, and vehicle exhaust, the truth is that adding any amount of additional development within the river corridor will further diminish the already degraded conditions within the river ecosystem. Adding more camping or expanding picnic sites or adding more parking or otherwise moving to accept more use within the river corridor within Yosemite Valley is not protecting or enhancing the ORVs and the connected ecology of the river system.

Accordingly, our Center respectfully asserts that the Park should not act in a contradictory manner by adopting positive policies that will benefit and enhance ORVs, while concurrently adding parking spaces, campsites or maintaining high sierra camps. We do not believe that the Park can then make the determination that the impacts to ORV's are not significant.

In summary, we urge that the Park do the maximum possible to (1) shift use out of the River corridor by removing non-essential facilities and operations; to (2) reduce summer season concentration of visitors and vehicles; to (3) restore missing attributes or processes (such as large woody debris or high functioning riparian areas along riverbanks); and to emphasize the long-term sustainable ecological health of the river corridor as a higher priority than accepting high levels of recreational demand and visitor services within the corridor.

The following comments from our Center address the specific questions asked at the workshop and in the workbook:

SEGMENT 1 ? MERCED RIVER ABOVE NEVADA FALL

1. Segment 1 wilderness trails: high encounter rates 1A-CSERC recommends decreasing Wilderness permits between Little Yosemite Valley and Merced Lake to decrease use on the trail. 1B-CSERC recommends incorporating High Sierra Camp users into the trailhead quota count.

2. Recreational User Conflicts 2C/2D- CSERC recommends closing or reducing down to 30 beds (and preferably less) the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp, which would remove or reduce effects of a core development amidst wilderness. It would also

reduce the number of stock needed to maintain the Camp.

3. Little Yosemite Valley Backpackers' Campground: Crowding 3C- Retain so that visitor use is concentrated

4. Merced Lake High Sierra Camp: Wilderness and ORV Impacts 4F- CSERC would prefer to see the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp closed and the area restored to natural conditions

5. Little Yosemite Valley Backpackers' Campground: Crowding 5A/5B -CSERC recommends keeping the Campground so that visitor use is concentrated, but lowering quotas for trailheads that lead to the Merced Lake area. We recommend retaining the composting toilet to meet the need of concentrated camping and avoidance of resource pollution.

SEGMENT 2.1 - EAST YOSEMITE VALLEY

6. Clarks Bridge to El Cap Bridge: Large Woody Debris Management 6A-CSERC recommends NOT removing woody debris so that the natural conditions along the river can re-establish. We support active restoration of woody debris where appropriate.

7. Riparian Zone Campsites 7A/7C-In response to multiple questions raised by Park planners about camping, CSERC consistently and strongly opposes new campground locations or expansion of existing campgrounds in the Valley except for minor expansion at the Camp 4 climbers camp.

9. Valley: Camping Demand 9B/9D- CSERC does not support additional campground locations in the Valley, but supports identification and expansion of those outside of the valley.

10. Sugar Pine Bridge/Ahwahnee Bridge/Road Berm: Free Flowing Condition 10C-For the Sugar Pine bridge and Ahwahnee bridge, CSERC supports removal of both bridges to restore free-flowing natural river conditions, with replacement of both bridges with foot bridges designed to protect the river conditions.

SEGMENT 2.2 - YOSEMITE VILLAGE AREA

11. Housekeeping Camp: Riparian and Flood Plain Impacts 11A-At Housekeeping Camp, we support strategically removing up to 93 lodging units now located within the riparian area.

12. Upper and Lower Rivers Campground Areas: 1997 Flood Impacts 12C/12D-We support fully restoring the floodplain and riparian areas at Upper and Lower Rivers campground areas where the 1997 flooding shows that these areas are within the natural floodplain. We oppose any new campgrounds within the river corridor.

14. Valley: Camping Demand 14C- Do not add any more camping to Yosemite Valley

15. Camp 6 Intersection: Congestion 15A-CSERC supports consideration of a roundabout and pedestrian undercrossing at the Camp 6 intersection.

SEGMENT 2.3 - YOSEMITE LODGE AREA

16. Leidig Meadow: Informal Trail Impacts 16A-At Leidig Meadow, we support removal of social trails and installation of boardwalks.

17. Swinging Bridge: Riparian Impacts 17C-At Swinging Bridge, we support removal of the existing picnic area and parking lot and relocation of the bathrooms to Sentinel Beach area.

18. Yosemite Valley: Paddling and Floating 18A-For paddling and floating, we support limiting paddling and floating to a limited section of the river that has minimal resource impact concerns.

19. Valley: Camping Demand 19C/D- As elsewhere, to protect already degraded resources and to reduce noise, smoke, and congestion, we oppose adding any more camping in the Valley except limited expansion at the Camp 4 climbers' camp.

20. Yosemite Lodge: Intersection Congestion 20A-At the Yosemite Lodge intersection, we support relocation of the Lodge entrance and the creation of a pedestrian promenade and an under pass for pedestrian access to Yosemite Falls.

SEGMENT 2.4 - WEST YOSEMITE VALLEY

21. El Cap Meadow: Informal Social Trails 21A-CSERC supports restoration fencing and boardwalks at El Cap Meadow to help

the meadow recover from trampling and social trails.

23. Valley: Camping Demand 23C- Do not add more camping to Yosemite Valley

24. Cathedral Beach Picnic Area: High Visitor Use 24A-At Cathedral Beach Picnic area, we support redesigning the picnic area at its current size to better manage visitor use and to protect sensitive areas.

SEGMENT 4 - EL PORTAL

26. Greenmeyer Sandpit: Flood and Riparian Plant Impacts from Fill Material 26A-Restore to natural conditions: remove fill material and recontour

27. Infrastructure: Valley Oaks Impacts 27B-CSERC supports repurposing the site where the current stand of Valley Oaks survives and restoring the area when infrastructure is removed in the future.

SEGMENTS 5, 6, 7, AND 8 ? SOUTH FORK MERCED RIVER WAWONA

29. Wawona Campground: Campground Activity Near River 29A-At the Wawona Campground, we support relocating or closing camp sites too close to the river.

31. South Fork: Paddling and Floating 31C- For paddling and floating, we support continued paddling and floating without any management of large woody debris, but with designated put-in and take-out for boats as well as limits on the number of boats per year to assure proper management during peak periods.

Thank you for considering these comments,

John Buckley, executive director Rebecca Cremeen, planning specialist

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Correspondence ID: 24 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Yosemite Campers Coalition Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,27,2011 19:03:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: RIVER MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES: YOUR IDEAS

Ecological and Natural Resource Values

? How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function?

Are you trying to direct the flow of the river? If you are then you are assuming a plan based on controlling Mother Nature. This has been tried in the past and in other places, and with time Mother Nature does what she has always done, the unpredictable.

Removing the bridges will not stop floods. Removing and not repairing campgrounds will not stop or impede the flow of the river. Flood events are part of the natural history in the valley.

Let Nature do what she has always done. Work with Nature, don't try to control it.

? How can we conserve our limited water supply? ? What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality?

Water quality and quantity is an important concern. Immediately, I think of the "fixed roof lodging" in the valley. I believe this is an area that can be minimized. When you are in a lodge or hotel showers are readily available. You have to have housekeeping cleaning staff that go in daily and clean showers, toilets, sheets, mop floors, etc. Reducing fixed roof lodging would help. In addition, it would help the environment because the use of cleansers and chemical cleaning agents would be reduced.

Based on my personal experience, campers use less water. We use communal bathrooms and showers shared by many. We don't need massive dishwashers, or hired help to wash dishes all day. Reducing fixed roof lodging and the necessary services to maintain it will reduce the negative impact on the quality and quantity of water.

Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values

? What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic

resources?

As stated in the workbook, the majority of archeological sites in Yosemite retain a high degree of integrity, reflecting cumulatively low to moderate disturbance severity levels. It seems that past efforts have protected to a high degree the archeological sites. However, past development in the valley and proposed changes may further disturb and destroy more sensitive areas. STOP NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE VALLEY AND HIGH COUNTRY. You cannot change what has already been disturbed but you can prevent further degradation of the land.

? How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river?

What do you mean by "quality"? My interpretation of quality connection means being able to have a campsite close to the river, being able to swim in the river, being able to take a raft ride down the river, being able to fish, or just to sit next to the river and contemplate and feel and hear the river move. For those who do not camp, the picnic areas can offer this same experience. The introduction of concessionaire rented rafts, in my opinion, added substantial degradation to areas along the river.

Visitor Use Management Program

I had the opportunity to participate in the web conference of 11/14/2011. It is my understanding that user capacity will be established following management decisions. How can the Park Service manage visitor use if criteria for user capacity has not been established? You can solicit our "ideas" but I have no idea how many people you are talking about or what type of visitor you are talking about. Campers need a reservation; lodge/hotel guests need reservations, backpackers and Half Dome hikers needs reservations/permits. Who does that leave? How many day visitors will be allowed? Will day visitors eventually be required to have reservations also?

? If the NPS were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?

I would prefer you use the term "re-build" parking inventory. Previous decisions and actions by the NPS to remove parking inventory have added to the present day dilemma of the shortage. Because camping requires that we bring in our own equipment, we drive in, park and set up camp. Typically, most campers use the shuttle service in the valley to get around. During the busy season, it is apparent that the valley shuttle service is widely used by all types of users.

Campers have their assigned parking spaces; hotel/lodge/housekeeping/Curry cabins have assigned parking. So the question is how many parking spaces do you allow for day use visitors?

? Would you support bus services along "new" routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?

Be more specific. Which group of users are you targeting to use this bus service? What type of bus services are you referring to and what are the "new" routes? How many people are you planning to accommodate? I feel this question is putting the cart in front of the horse. How can we, as interested, concerned users of Yosemite contribute meaningful input without knowing the user capacity?

User capacity information is the underlying foundation for all specific management options. I would have to say NO based on the above reasons.

? Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why Not?

NO. See above comments for reason.

? If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?

If all other types of visitors require reservations and parking spaces are allocated for these visitors, it appears you can make a close "ballpark" figure for necessary parking spaces. The only group that is allowed to enter the park without reservations are day visitors. What are your plans? How many day use visitors does the NPS want to accommodate? Whether day use visitors drive in or are shuttled in from satellite parking lots, how many people are you talking about?

? What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities?

How many different ways is the NPS going to ask the same question? RE-BUILD THE CAMPGROUNDS. The NPS has in it's possession a petition submitted by the Yosemite Campers Coalition. There are over 2,000 petition signers. Doesn't that tell you something? Campers have the least impact on the environment, we do not require all the services that fixed roof lodging

requires and it requires the least upkeep and maintenance in the valley.

Eliminate the concessionaire rafting business.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS

The 1980 GMP did not call for the removal of the flooded campgrounds. Re-build them.

Establishing "new" camp sites outside the valley is creating a future dilemma. You will then have to disturb untouched land in Yosemite, create a transportation system to bring these visitors into the valley, add to infrastructure, increase maintenance and upkeep work in the high country, or wherever you add these sites. If the NPS has not managed to control and protect the valley what are your management plans for the new campsites.

And why have you limited your re-location plans just to campers? If just campers are sent to other locations isn't that discrimination? You have your studies regarding demographics of users. Ethnic minority groups, low to moderate income groups, the disabled will be pushed out and denied access to the Yosemite experience.

SUMMARY

I have been actively involved in the YVP since 1997. I have met with many different NPS personnel over the years regarding the Plan. Do you realize that if the campgrounds had been rebuilt with the money allocated for repairs due to the flood, that your job of protecting Yosemite would have been easier? The rush to tear out the campgrounds, the decisions to remove parking spaces has added to the current management problems.

As the guardians of Yosemite National Park let your decisions be guided by what is good for the park, and by what is fair and just for ALL who wish to visit this sacred place.

Sincerely,

Angela R. Caldera, Co-Founder, Yosemite Campers Coalition 621 [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 25 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,30,2011 08:27:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Limiting access as a tool to help the river is a slippery slope. Once you start down this path, where will it end? The next step is to require special passes or application to even get into the park. Ultimately, only the special few will be allowed to get in. The access restriction concept is what the NPS and USFS really wants, to limit or restrict all access except to those that are in "grace" with the NPS or USFS.

Correspondence ID: 26 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,30,2011 09:01:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: we beleive that the very idea that the park service....need to have a law suit filed against them to force "others" agendas in regulating the amount of people that can use/visit national parks is just a waste of time and money...if special groups are allowed to manipulate the way parks are managed the next thing would be that no one would ever be able to set foot in one....this may sound extreme but no more that spending 50 million on the courts.....that 50,000,000 could have gone along way to improving an aleady cash straped park system.....we live just outside the sequoia nat "Forest" and see how much less restrictive that is compared to the park system...i dont think the parks would ever let anything upste the natural setting of yosemite thanks michael and karin gee

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Correspondence ID: 27 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to extend my opinion that opening up paddling in Yosemite, specifically the Merced River, would great enhance the experience and educational enhancement of the public about why national parks and the protection of wildlife and wild places is so vital.

Many thanks,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 28 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,23,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Yosemite National Park Directors, In regards to the above mentioned topic, I advocate the use of the Rivers of Yosemite in order to connect people to the spectacular beauty of this magnificant treasure. Allowing paddlesports will provide direct connection to the values of the rivers. After experiencing a paddling trip on these rivers many people will be transformed into advocates for Yosemite National Park and for cleaning up those and many other rivers. Thank you for all you do to protect, preserve, and assist people in a trip they will not soon forget. Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 29 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,23,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please! We were out there this last summer and it would have been great to paddle there!

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 30 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,23,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear YNP Planning Members,

I have been visiting Yosemite National Park since I was a child and I fully credit my love for nature with the early experiences I had while visiting the park. It is a magical place that I try to visit as much as I can but unfortunately the visits are getting further apart every time. Being a very active whitewater kayaker and passionate member of the paddling community I spend most of my vacations at national and state parks where I can spend time on their mighty rivers. The opportunity to visit yosemite and spend time paddling the length of the amazing Wild and Scenic Merced river would be a dream come true that would guarantee yearly visit. There is no question that being able to paddle the Merced in it's entirety would create the connection with nature and Yosemite that will make stewards to the park and river of us all. If there's concern with managing high use stretches to protect both the park, it's animals and the river, I completely understand and feel the same concern. With my experience on various rivers all throughout the USA I can confidently say that these concerns can easily be alleviated through a simple permitting system and faith in the paddling community. We are all passionate about rivers and do everything we can to protect them and the nature around them. Thank you for your time and I really do hope that you are able to find a way to open up the entire length of the Merced River to all recreation.

Hope to see you on the river!

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 31 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Yosemite Park Planners, Please consider the historic and recreational value of allowing paddling on the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River. Paddling is the lowest impact way to experience the wild beauty of the park. As an environmental biology major I am aware of many of the dangers of erosion and soil compaction that impact the parks hiking and biking paths. As a former docent of Humboldt State Redwoods park I have seen the impact of unauthorized use and over use of foot and bike traffic. As a kayaker and former Colorado raft guide I've seen first hand exactly how low impact paddling is on the natural resources of some of the most beautiful parks in the United States. If the put in and take outs are paved or stone lined... the impact is virtually zero... not even footprints will be left. Hiking, camping, backpacking and climbing all pose significantly more strain and impact on the resources of the park then someone floating down the river. Trash bins and restrooms at both put in and take out sites will reduce any other forms of unwanted impact from less respectful guests. Perhaps in the beginning of a testing phase consider a permit system for private users and a ban on commercial rafting.

Thank you for your valuable time and consideration,

Correspondence ID: 32 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To Whom it May Concern,

Opening all of the Merced to paddling is an outstanding idea. We are in the midst of a time period when the importance of educating the general public about the value of our natural resources cannot be overstated. The amount of pristine, unspoiled land in this country and around the world is diminishing quickly and the majority of the population has no direct connection

with these rapidly disappearing areas. Being able to expose people to these areas by floating down the river, in my experience, has proved to be an extremely valuable tool in causing people to start reconsidering the value of places as amazing as the Merced valley. Once people start appreciating the worth of the place they are experiencing it causes a domino effect and their consideration for other such important natural areas becomes much more realistic and personal. We as a society need to do everything in our power to preserve whats left of our pristine rivers and forests as they are our lifeline to survival. Opening the Merced to the public for boating is a small step but a much needed one all the same. Thanks for the time and consideration.

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 33 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,23,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I truly feel that restricting all paddling on the river is bias in what you allow in Yosemite. Climbers on the walls, hikers on the trails, buses going up and down the hill, camping in the valley floor. Regulating numbers of boaters is not rocket science these days as most all rivers require permits, and there are several different systems use, and quite successfully I might add. Allowing boaters on the river to float through the valley is one way to see and appreciate the beauty of Yosemite. I, myself, can no longer hike do to injuries, but I can still row a boat. Please, consider this long and hard as another way for the public to enjoy our National Park. Thank you. [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 34 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,23,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I'm writing in support of opening the entire wild and scenic portions of the Merced River to boating. There is no compelling reason to close these sections, and the opportunity to experience these areas is a vital part of access and enjoyment of public lands, especially in Yosemite Park, where floating the Merced could be new and exceptional experience of the park . Please consider this in formulating the new management plan.

Correspondence ID: 35 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,23,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To Sir or Ms: I am writing with regard to the discussion of allowing boating within the Park. I understand that currently there are only two stretches of boating within the Park that allow boating, a class I-II section of the Merced near El Capitan and the South Fork of the Merced near Wawona. I would like to ask you to reconsider the restrictions in place on the rest of the Wild and Scenic Merced River (near the park boundary and above Nevada Falls) as well as the boatable tributaries such as Big Creek and Yosemite Creek (above the falls) not to mention the Tuolumne River above Hetch Hetchy and its tributaries (but I know that is a water issue). Kayaking, canoeing, and rafting offer a low impact means of travel that allow boaters to experience the park in ways that trails or horses can't. We are able to access the deepest canyons for a chance to see the untouched areas of the park. I have been to Yosemite dozens of times, I have hiked to the top of Half Dome with my Boy Scout Troop as a younger man three times. I love the park. But it is the same thing that draws me that draws so many others to the park. Boating would offer me a method to quickly escape the hordes of tourists to have a unique experience in the park and enjoy the solitude that Yosemite once stood for. I know there is concern about the impact that boaters have on the environment. I can say from my 18 years of boating experience, that I have never met such an environmentally friendly and conscious group as I have with kayakers. We follow the principles of leave no trace camping and leave the natural aspect of the environment untouched. Please, reconsider the restrictions. Allow boating inside the park, allow our group of outdoor enthusiast the means to experience the park in all its grandeur in by experiencing the river. Thanks for your time. [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 36 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,23,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hello Yosemite National Park Management,

I am writing to comment on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. I am an avid whitewater kayaker from Mammoth Lakes, CA. I would like to see all rivers and creeks within Yosemite National Park open to non-motorized boating (kayaks and rafts). The Merced and Tuolumne Rivers including their tributaries contain world class whitewater which is currently closed to kayaks and rafts.

Other national parks such as Sequoia and Kings Canyon allow non-motorized boating on their rivers and lakes. These rivers are paddled by kayakers from California and worldwide every year. Non-motorized boating of rivers is low impact, presents no hazard to other park visitors, and is no more dangerous than other sports which are permitted (such as rock climbing). In addition, whitewater kayakers and rafters are generally a respectful and informed user group.

Please consider the requests of American Whitewater and boaters worldwide to open Yosemite's waterways to non-motorized boating.

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 37 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,23,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am a senior paddler, a kayaker, whose greatest joy is paddling. Seeing nature while floating down a river is a very special joy. Please work hard to include floating Yosemite in your management plan. [redacted].

Correspondence ID: 38 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,21,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: You should allow boating on rivers in YNP. Hell you can bolt climbs & ride horses in the park, even drive your car on roads through the middle of the valley, but you can't float down the rivers???

Correspondence ID: 39 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,21,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hi, my name is [redacted] and I am an 11 year old kayaker. The first time I went to Yosemite, my parents floated the Merced from their campground to the bridge by El Cap. I was only months old and in a baby front pack so I don't remember much but the photos are awesome! Since then, I have paddled the Merced from the Portal put in on down to the BLM campground above the class 5 waterfall and loved every minute of it. I believe there are several hundred people that would thoroughly love to run the entire river legally, and show that the rivers in protected areas can be even more protected by being accessible. Kayakers tend to be active environmentalists who cherish the back country and try to leave it better than they received it. Thank you for considering making this true, navigable gem, a reality!

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 40 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,20,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Yosemite National Park planning crew, Yosemite is widely known for its beautiful valleys, and spectacular rivers. There is no richer way to experience a place than to paddle it. Allowing paddle sports to enter these gorges would allow people to see the park at its full potential. Please consider opening these rivers to the public. Thanks for the time! Sincerely, [redacted]
Whitewater and nature enthusiast

Correspondence ID: 41 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Nov,20,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To whom it may concern, Allow kayaking and rafting on the Merced river in Yosemite. [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 42 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,01,2011 20:53:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Don't limit U.S. citizens from access to their park. Limit foreigners by charging them more and limiting their access. This park was designated for U.S. citizens not Europeans or Chinese. I want to fish the river don't limit me at all!!

Correspondence ID: 43 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,06,2011 06:59:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As much as i enjoy the quiet park in the winter and understand what is trying to be accomplished. When i take my 3 kids to the park in the summer, we bring our camping trailer. My modern day trailer only fits in 2 spots in Lower pines. So needless to say it is extremely difficult to ever get a camping spot in the valley. Add to that the scalping and the craziness of getting reservations and it is obvious that the river campgrounds or something similar need to be restored. That is my only opinion on the plan

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Correspondence ID: 44 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,08,2011 11:33:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I have concerns about the MRP and how it will be applied and enforced in the Wawona Section 35 area. I own 5 = acres with the Merced River South Fork running through the middle and the NPS cannot keep trespassers out. Their most recent excuses are that they don't have the manpower or resources. These people that trespass are NPS visitors and employees. The visitors pay

an entrance fee yet none of that money is past on to we landowners for damages done by them. Why doesn't the NPS keep their visitors and public informed of private lands in Section 35? NPS could inform visitors at the Park Entrance Gates, stores, post office, hotel and business with maps of private lands. NPS could strictly enforce No Trespassing laws including making sure all businesses, particularly rentals, or rental companies strictly adhere to No Trespass laws. Those renters and rental companies are making large sums of money and encouraging their cliental to use our land. NPS rangers in the Wawona area seem to have a high turnover rate. They are not informed of where private lands are when they come in. Their orientation to the area is not good. I met with two Rangers this summer, they both had been in Wawona approximately 2 years and they never were aware of our private land. I do not have a residence on my property so this makes it difficult for me to police as I live some distance away. Some problems associated with park visitors or trespassers are litter discarded which I have to clean up, extreme foot traffic that damages vegetation critical to wildlife. Swimmers damming up the river to make themselves a swim area by moving rocks, muddying the water, and destroying riparian areas critical to aquatic critters. Trespassers bring their dogs to the river to swim. The dogs are left to run free and when they defecate the owners don't pick up the waste. Trespassers in the summer come to swim, many are park employees with their children with no restrooms around. So they find a tree or bush and they must be like those with dogs, they don't pick it up. This is all within close proximity to the river. Lately its been a favorite spot to do their business next to the little pump house, which the static water lever is 8' down. Not a very far distance for fecal material to travel in a modest rain shower. I bet the water tastes different for those residences they service.

I don't know what the answers are but I am very disappointed in how disrespectful other property owners and park visitors are to us. Our land has been in our family since the 1960's as a sand, gravel, and concrete business. We have been working since the early 1970's to restore and clean up what a business of that type does. Please notify visitors, public, and local residences that there are other places that are public, NPS land that they can occupy. Yosemite has 750k acres for them to use, please don't use our measly 5 acres. Have some respect to the property owners rights to quiet enjoyment of their land, they pay for it with taxes and insurance. I don't go to their property and occupy!

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 45 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,13,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

December 12, 2011

Don Neubacher, Superintendent Yosemite National Park P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

ATTN: COMMENTS ON MERCED RIVER PLAN ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS/WORKBOOK

Superintendent Neubacher and Planning Team:

Following are comments concerning the recent Merced River Plan Alternatives Development exercise.

The foundational underpinning of the Merced River Plan is user capacity. Planners are well aware that user capacity must provide the underlying context for the site-specific management considerations highlighted in the workbook and at the workshops. The Settlement Agreement underscored that point by stating that the user capacity experts will be "participating in the?workshops in order to help frame the discussions that take place so that user capacity is integrated throughout the planning effort." Yet during the recent round of workshops, any discussion of user capacity as integral to the decision-making process was absent; in fact, in one of the workshops it was apparently stated that user capacity will be established after management decisions are completed'if indeed that's the case, user capacity is starting to sound like an add-on rather than "integrated throughout the planning effort." How can the public make meaningful and informed comments on any of the site-specific considerations when the options are presented as isolated situations with one line descriptions and no back-up documentation, justification, or context?

User capacity is defined as the quantity of recreation use which an area can sustain without adverse impact on the 1) outstandingly remarkable values and free-flowing character of the river area; 2) without adverse impact on the quality of the recreation experience; and 3) without adverse impact on public health and safety. Though planners appear to have invested energy in ensuring certain of the natural outstandingly remarkable values and free-flowing character of the river are protected and enhanced, there appears to have been a lack of attention directed to evaluating the "quality of the recreation experience" and there has been no discussion with respect to "public safety" (i.e., correlation between numerical capacity in a box canyon and the ability to safely evacuate should a major emergency occur).

It would seem that up until the spring Recreation workshop and the release of the Draft ORV Baseline Condition Assessment Report, the planning process was proceeding in a methodical, common sense fashion. The original Scoping Report was revised in favor of a Scoping Summary that more accurately reflected public comments; the ORV Report/definitions appeared to reinforce/build on NPS Management Policies and the 1980 GMP; the spring workshops introduced a wealth of information/on-

going research for the public to consider further reinforcing the foundational documents. But the process seemed to fall apart with the Draft ORV Baseline Condition Assessment Report'especially as it relates to the Recreation chapter and the follow-on Recreation ORV workshop in May. Of all the ORVs, Recreation is the most controversial since that is the value about which the public is most familiar and passionate. It was critical for the May workshop and the Draft ORV Baseline Condition Assessment Report to set the foundation for an in-depth public discussion about the type and amount of recreation appropriate to the Merced River Corridor in the context of user capacity and how the public perceives the quality of that recreation experience. That did not happen.

Though the Recreation ORV definitions highlight appropriate recreation activities in the River corridor, there appears to have been no attempt to gather input from those participating in the identified activities as to how they perceive the quality of their experience and suggested management considerations for the protection and enhancement of those experiences. Concerns about the lack of data were detailed in a comment letter to Kathleen Morse (6/1/11) following the May 25 Recreation Workshop:

"Previous research about participation rates presented in the Draft Report and at the Workshop are based on self-administered surveys assessing visitor participation in activities and at facilities Park-wide (including shopping and dining); surveys were distributed at the entrance gates for visitors to return at some point after they return home and are not specific to activities in the Merced River Corridor; though this research is a good starting point and may give an indication of participation in the Merced River Corridor, their presentation in Report tables and workshop slides gives them more emphasis than perhaps they are due'in light that there is little else to draw from. The primary research specific to this Segment appears to focus on attraction site participation leaving critical data gaps with respect to other activities that are outstandingly remarkable in their own right. Camping appears to be treated as an overnight accommodation in the same discussion with lodging; camping is an active pursuit requiring direct interaction with nature, where testing and practice of outdoor skills in a non-threatening environment opens the door to greater self-reliance and self-confidence; lodging is a passive pursuit and cannot be considered an "activity." Though the Draft Report contains various tables and results, it is difficult for the reader to put them in perspective since surveys are not necessarily comparable "given that they were conducted at different points in time, focused on different locations, and asked different questions;" additionally, "counts of Valley visitation are not available" and do "not Public Comment'Merced River Plan Alternatives Development Page 3 of 21 December 12, 2011

distinguish between day visitors and overnight visitors." Management considerations for future protection and enhancement of specific outstandingly remarkable recreation values are limited and/or largely absent. So it seems there's not a lot to work with here with respect to focused research enabling a thorough assessment of the condition of the Segment 2 outstandingly remarkable recreation values, other than what's been done at attraction sites?"

"The Alternatives need to connect the dots between NPS management policy, Yosemite management policy, how the ORVs are defined, and the condition of those ORVs so that whatever decisions are made as to the types and amounts of outstandingly remarkable recreation activities that will be distributed across the range of alternatives, the public can clearly understand the rationale and the justification. As a foundational document, the Recreation Chapter does not provide clarity and that's a problem?"

Since the final version of the ORV Baseline Conditions Assessment Report has not been made available to the public in advance of these workshops (and has still not been released), there is no way to know if it has undergone revision. This foundational document is integral to the alternative development planning process'especially as it applies to the Recreation ORV. Without that platform solidly in place connecting the dots to earlier foundational documents, the Alternative Development workshops/workbook deteriorated into the typical feeding frenzy of special interests with the public "voting" for carefully wordsmithed one-line management options/bullet points dealing with unrelated specifics devoid of any back-up documentation explaining what, in fact, the public was even "voting" for. And the absence of any discussion of user capacity as the underlying foundation for site-specific management options renders the entire alternative development exercise meaningless.

Compounding the issue was the absence of any public review/discussion concerning transportation and parking considerations. Though not part of the Federal Register Notice of Intent (6/30/09), Park press notices listed parkwide transportation planning as an element of the Merced River Plan and an important part of scoping. This past Spring, the series of workshops included a Transportation workshop which announced the impending release of the Transportation Improvement Strategies Report (TISR), a Report that would offer numerous parkwide strategies to improve transportation. On October 3, the TISR was released for public review with no real fanfare (and no mention in the recent workshops). Shortly thereafter, we learned that due to personnel changes in Planning Directors and Superintendents, the parkwide transportation element that was to be part of the MRP has since been abandoned. According to the workbook, more than 70% of visitors end up in Yosemite Valley. Meanwhile separate transportation planning efforts along Tioga Pass and at the South Gate/Mariposa Grove are being conducted apart from how those decisions will impact the Merced River corridor. If 70% of visitors find their way to the Valley, how can a parkwide transportation plan NOT be part of the MRP? Transportation is like a pipeline; you can't dabble with isolated sections apart from Public Comment'Merced River Plan Alternatives Development Page 4 of 21 December 12, 2011

addressing the impacts on the entire system'wasn't that the Park's justification for needing an entirely new/redesigned sewer system??? At the recent Alternatives workshop, the question was asked as to why transportation and parking were not being discussed at length; the response was that the planning team was "embarrassed" because they had not reached any conclusions and was therefore not ready to present any options to the public. Since transportation and parking decisions underlie site specific decision-making'all of which are dependent on user capacity, any comment deadline for alternatives should be extended until such time as workshops can be scheduled offering opportunities for public review/discussion of these topics. As previously stated, without this critical information the entire alternative development exercise is meaningless.

Additionally, there has been no discussion of how the Park plans to implement Footnote 5 of the 9th Circuit Ruling:

To illustrate the level of degradation already experienced in the Merced..., we need look no further than the dozens of facilities and services operating within the river corridor, including but not limited to, the many swimming pools, tennis courts, mountain sports shops, restaurants, cafeterias, bars, snack stands and other food and beverage services, gift shops, general merchandise stores, an ice-skating rink, an amphitheater, a specialty gift shop, a camp store, an art activity center, rental facilities for bicycles and rafts, skis and other equipment, a golf course and a [High Sierra Camp] dining hall accommodating 70 people. 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.

Though the Recreation ORV definitions briefly mention the character of the human built environment appropriate to the Merced River corridor and the recreation experience, there has been no further discussion as to what facilities and services will be allowed to remain within the river corridor, which will be eliminated, and what is the justification? It would seem that decisions about the presence/absence of facilities/services would be integral to user capacity, transportation, and parking decisions'yet the public is being asked to comment on site-specific options, absent any of that information. And how might removal of facilities contribute to expanded options for protection and enhancement of Biological, Cultural, Scenic, Hydrological, as well as Recreation ORVs?

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Though I would have preferred to submit comments via your web template for workbook pages 27-29, the space allotted for the questions on page 27 only allows entry of 3 typed lines/question. I would hate to think that's all the feedback you are interested in receiving'especially since some of the questions seemingly could double as "problem statements" for a scientifically based master's/doctoral thesis while others are broad-based, complex essay questions. For all the money invested in the workbook, it will be interesting to see how many members of the public actually find it useful vs. too overwhelming, even intimidating.

RIVER MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES: YOUR IDEAS

I. Ecological and Natural Resource Values

1. How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function?

Planners need to step back and view the River as a complete free-flowing system as part of a long-term vision, not one to be controlled by rip rap, fencing, bank stabilization, re-vegetation, diversions, road construction, El Capitan moraine, etc. As stated by David Cehrs, a registered geologist and a certified hydrogeologist with years of experience with Yosemite:

"The NPS does not seem to be cognizant of the fact that the river has infinitely more power than the NPS does and the river will do whatever it wants, whenever it wants to any and all anthropogenic structures within Yosemite Valley." (Declaration to the Court; October 3, 2006)

"Within the confines of Yosemite Valley the Merced River is a meandering river. The meandering Merced channel migrates laterally across the Valley floor and over time the channel occupies all locations within the Valley, talus slope to talus slope, and this action forms the floodplain. Channel migration is natural river behavior and is the result of river hydraulics within the channel curves. Water moves faster on the outside of the channel curve and slower on the inside of the channel curve. This results in erosion on the outside of curves and deposition on the inside of curves; the resulting deposit is called a point bar. The top of the point bar deposit is the floodplain. Most of the Yosemite Valley floor (river channel, floodplain, meadows, wetlands) is formed from the meandering river point bar deposits reworking past Valley floor glacial sediments with the additional input of new Sierran derived sediment; the remainder of the Valley floor is formed by alluvial fans from the tributary side streams entering the Valley, for example Yosemite Creek. Old Merced River locations can be located by their remnant oxbows observable on portions of the Yosemite Valley floor. The oxbows are abandoned channel meander curves." (Declaration to the Court; September 6, 2006)

Flooding is a natural process and occurs annually along the Merced River corridor. Rather than trying to "control" the river, planners should be considering options for flood-resistant or flood-flexible design (e.g., breakaway features, easily restorable utility connections, flexible land-use considerations, etc.). I'm reminded of a presentation by the former head of Curry Company who stated that the rustic log cabins that used to be at the Lodge flooded every year and all the concessionaire did was tear out and replace the flooring and do other minor repairs; that flooding was not used as an excuse to tear down the cabins to be replaced by more expensive, Motel-6-style lodging. Public Comment'Merced River Plan Alternatives Development Page 6 of 21 December 12, 2011

2. How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat?

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.

However, according to the Draft ORV Baseline Conditions Assessment Report, the meadows and riparian section "will be updated once the forthcoming NPS condition assessment reports become available." The Report goes on to state "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 can the public be expected to provide an informed response? 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." And again, one can't discount hydrogeologist David Cehr's citation referenced above explaining the impact of River hydrology on observed conditions in the meadows and riparian areas.

Consequently, it is problematic to seriously consider any of the proposed "protective" site-specific options as anything more than best-guess approaches since the scientific validity of the underlying assumptions have yet to be verified.

3. Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?

Insufficient information has been made available to the public to enable an informed response.

4. How can we conserve our limited water supply?

Reduce/eliminate resort-style facilities and services which have no relationship to the reasons for which the Park was established (e.g., Chefs Holidays, Vintner Holidays, conferences, multiple Bracebridge Dinners, expanded restaurant opportunities, mid-scale/upscale lodging w/amenities, etc.) that require significant water usage. Fewer services can result in fewer visitor impacts as visitors desiring resort activities may opt to go elsewhere.

On the flip side, camping and picnicking are self-contained and use minimal services/water (i.e., limited access to showers, no laundry service, minimal need for restaurants, etc.) and, by virtue of being resource-focused, are conducive to the reasons for which the Park was established.

A reduction in facilities/services/amenities will also result in a corresponding reduction in employees/employee housing/employee water usage. From a more broad-based perspective, there needs to be/should have been a comprehensive operational study evaluating how many employees'both NPS and Concessions'are needed to perform a base level of services. Such a study should include analysis of seasonal needs, split shifts, how many additional people are associated with each employee, needs of single employees vs. employees with families, cost-benefit evaluation of shoulder season activities vs. employees required, emergency response criteria, and more. Another component of the study should evaluate how many employees'both NPS and Concessions'should have housing in Yosemite Valley based on the nature of their job function. It appears that the current practice locates employees based on vacancies in existing structures rather than evaluating whether those structures (or employees) are even needed at all. The operational study also needs to analyze the environmental (including water usage), economic, sociological and sprawl-inducing impacts of not reducing the number of employees but merely moving them to sensitive outlying communities such as El Portal, Wawona, and Foresta.

5. What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality?

Insufficient information made available to the public to enable an informed response, especially with respect to analysis of administrative and concessionaire stock use.

II. Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values

1. What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources?

Resolving the deep-seated controversy concerning Yosemite's lineal descendants (Paiute vs. Miwok) is critical to adequately defining the Cultural ORV and ensuring its protection and enhancement. Cultural ORVs are unique among ORVs in that once a cultural site is destroyed or desecrated it is an irretrievable, irreversible loss. WSRA mandates that 'Archaeologic' and

'Historic' are primary emphasis elements; therefore it is imperative that the Cultural ORV be clearly defined with goals, measurable objectives, and management prescriptions that explain specifically how the agency will protect the archaeologic, historic, or cultural values of the Merced River Corridor. What about ORVs specific to the Paiute culture'and does the NPS even acknowledge them? And now that the Miwok Indian Cultural Center has become reality, will it provide sufficient "net gain" points to allow desecration of other cultural sites along the River Corridor? This would be a tragic loss'especially in light of the justifiable concerns of the Paiutes and the failure of the Park Service to recognize their ancestral ties to the Park.

Significant energy must focus on El Portal. As previous plans have stated: "The El Portal archeological district contains 17 known sites. Prehistoric human burials in both isolated locations and in cemeteries, along with burial objects, have been identified. Recent archeological research (Hull et al. 1999) indicates resources in El Portal may represent some of the earliest human occupation and use of the Merced River corridor, dating possibly as early as 9,500 years ago. El Portal also may contain the best-preserved archeological resources from the protohistoric and early historic periods associated with American Indian cultural change. Although modern development has significantly changed the landscape and has destroyed archeological deposits in many places, much could be learned from these resources." An interpretation of NHPA by Chief of Resources Niki Nicholas that "NHPA allows digging up as long as there is mitigation. Some of the areas most suitable for development from a construction standpoint are those that include ORVs" is of concern. Cultural resources are not renewable.

2. How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river?

How can planners know what is considered a "quality connection" when they've never surveyed the visitor concerning the "quality" of their experience in the Merced River corridor? What is the quantity and mix of an activity that an area can sustain without adversely impacting the Recreation ORV? When does one person's recreational interest intrude on another person's right to solace? Can an activity be mitigated to the level where it only impacts those in the immediate vicinity of the activity? What guidelines will prevent an activity from reaching critical mass where it can potentially impact nature, history, and large volumes of people? To what degree does commercializing an informal activity significantly increase the impacts? Should the NPS (and by extension, the concessionaire) even be in the business of "marketing" or exploiting recreation (e.g., raft rentals, bicycle rentals, commercial trail rides, fishing/backpacking rentals and sales) or merely be "accommodating" recreational activities for those who supply their own equipment? Does the current park practice of site hardening and erecting fencing and other obstructions to contain and control large volumes of people impact the individualized, self-guided experience free from the bustle of crowds? What levels of noise drown out the sounds of the River and the wildlife'numerous tour buses, RVs, RV generators, loud radios, supply

trucks, motorcycles, loud partying, barking dogs, too much construction in the name of trying to "improve" or "exploit" nature? Does the smell of diesel fumes or the stables'byproducts from activities that serve a few'impact the sensual experience of the many? Is the future of Yosemite to be a "nature center," or will it continue its march toward becoming a "profit center?

III. Visitor Use Management Program

1. If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?

How can the public assess parking inventory when there's been no discussion concerning user capacity requirements? Shouldn't there be a correlation between the numbers of parking spaces and the numbers of people to be managed? Furthermore, there's been no discussion about transportation which also has a direct correlation to parking inventory'both where parking might be located and how much. What IS the existing parking inventory'apparently a new study was conducted this past summer but the results have yet to be released? How is the existing parking inventory being used? An earlier analysis revealed more than half of existing spaces are used by NPS and DNC employees (commuters and residents) as well as for park operations; additionally, a significant number are set aside for overnight accommodations (lodging, camping). The manipulated congestion caused by a lack of spaces specifically for day visitors (80% of the visitor population) has resulted in misguided calls for increased busing and day-use reservations when perhaps the focus needs to be on failed parking management practices. The MRP presents an opportunity to explore the parking situation in depth rather than look for the "easy out" (i.e., remote parking lots, distant shuttle routes, day-use reservations, etc.)

Critical to the entire discussion of parking inventory and transportation is how the Park plans to deal with the language in the 1980 GMP and other follow-on documents concerning goals for transportation and parking in Yosemite Valley.

"A study will be undertaken to find a method to totally eliminate cars and other obtrusive vehicles from Yosemite Valley. As additional bus service from outlying areas on the periphery of the park and in gateway communities becomes feasible, all day visitors and ultimately all overnight visitors will be able to enjoy the Valley without their cars. Each phase of the transportation system will be adequately planned to minimize environmental impact, solve operational problems, and promote public acceptance." (page 20, 1980 GMP)

"Private vehicles will ultimately be excluded from Yosemite Valley. The immediate steps to be taken include the removal of

more than 1,000 parking spaces from the Valley? (page 19, 1980 GMP)

"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)

"Develop a public transportation system that would allow the eventual elimination of private vehicles from the valley." (page 9, 1997 Valley Implementation Plan)

A total ban on private vehicles was "recommended because it is considered an ultimate goal of the 1980 General Management Plan. However, the General Management Plan also recognized that the goal was infeasible at the time of its initial approval, and that a phased, collaborative approach would be needed to ultimately achieve this goal. Collaboration is ongoing to develop a regional transportation system [aka YARTS] that would provide initial and developmental steps toward achieving the goal. It is not possible to project when it would be feasible to remove all private vehicles from Yosemite Valley." (2000 YVP/DEIS, Executive Summary, page 2-28)

"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)

"In fact, Yosemite is planning on reducing its parking spaces, while increasing the number just outside the park. The intent, park spokesman Scott Gediman says, is to get more motorists into buses." (Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 5/29/01)

The Merced River Plan will amend the 1980 GMP. Will planners have sufficient courage to take this opportunity to eliminate/amend all GMP language referring to removal of private vehicle access to Yosemite Valley so that an honest, forthright, and broad-based discussion can take place concerning transportation at Yosemite? In so doing, will there be an analysis of capacity impacts with respect to experiencing the Valley with/without a personal vehicle? How will transportation and parking decisions affect the ORVs? For example, with respect to the

Recreation ORV, past (now rescinded) plans openly acknowledged that "Changes in parking access could affect some visitor's ability or willingness to undertake some recreational activities. Without their vehicles, visitors would need to carry recreation gear, load and unload it on shuttle buses, and possibly store it in designated areas during the day. Moderate to major adverse impacts would be experienced by day visitors undertaking equipment-intensive activities." It would seem that in order to protect and enhance the recreation ORV from both a capacity and participation perspective, as well as optimize the environmental effects of transportation on natural/cultural ORVs, there should be a full analysis of transportation as it relates to these ORVs. What are the effects of a transit only access system based on a known numeric limit on recreation/culture/nature, and what are the effects of private vehicle access with a known numeric limit on recreation/culture/nature?

A few additional thoughts regarding parking: ? Well-managed private vehicle access to Yosemite Valley and throughout the Park is environmentally, economically, and sociologically superior to any busing scheme and must be retained as the primary mode of travel. Sedan-style vehicles associated with auto-touring have far less impact on park resources than oversized RVs and buses. ? Explore strategies resulting in better coordination of tour buses including a possible reduction in numbers. ? The decision to substantially reduce parking in Yosemite Valley needs to be revisited. The addition of small, dispersed, unobtrusive parking areas served by a fast, fun, and friendly in-Valley shuttle system needs to be explored and would reduce much of the traffic congestion'perhaps parking areas that are less formal and less regimented, not requiring more asphalt. Such lots might only operate seasonally, Memorial Day through Labor Day, enabling resources to recover the remaining 7-8 months of the year. ? Increase shuttle service throughout the Valley including West Valley destinations. Implement aggressive "Ride the Valley Shuttle" campaign: would include restricting overnight visitors to assigned parking; requiring YCS/NPS employees to "bus" to work; informing day visitors to leave their vehicles parked until such time as they are ready to leave the Valley. ? Explore strategies for using traffic management personnel more effectively, more broadly, and more visibly. ? A mandatory employee transportation program must be explored that is the financial and administrative responsibility of the Park or Concessionaire or Park Partner as employers. In designing such a program there needs to be an examination of ways to reduce split shifts, avoid staggered start times, and otherwise consolidate work schedules, etc. Employees commuting to Yosemite Valley using their private vehicle for convenience currently occupy a significant number of parking spaces that are supposed to be available to visitors. Visitor parking must have priority over employee parking.

2. Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?

Absolutely not!!! First of all, the workbook offers no explanation as to what these "new routes" might be. Will they be through the gateway communities?? As nationally recognized environmental stewards, the Park has a responsibility to evaluate prospective policy changes in light of how those changes might actually advance sprawl and environmental degradation outside its boundaries. Why turn the gateway communities into overflow parking lots because the Park is unable to manage its visitation? The late environmental icon, David Brower, put the following on record at a Madera County Board of Supervisors meeting:

"The wisdom of the Madera County Board of Supervisors, in coming to grips with a foolish plan emphasizing so-called 'shuttle buses' and car parking lots, is exemplary. Introducing fleets of diesel-fume spewing buses to offset highly exaggerated 'congestion' in Yosemite Valley is not the answer. It is bad for the environment, and it is bad for the tourism economies of the gateway communities. Big parking lots degrade the Foothills, changing the village atmosphere and character to big city sprawl. John Muir cared as much for the Sierra Foothills leading to Yosemite as he did for Yosemite Valley. If carried out, the NPS/YARTS bus project will damage both the Foothills and Yosemite Valley. To boot, all this will be done in the name of protecting the 'environment.' NO! Thank you, Madera County Board of Supervisors, for sorting out fact from fiction. I urge you to continue your leadership in putting an end to this ill-conceived bus project." (2/16/99)

And without any clearly defined user capacity information, how can there be any meaningful discussion about bus service along new routes into the park? Any input would appear to "shoot from the hip" absent any valid context. Planners need to go back to step 1'establish a scientifically determined user capacity for the Merced River corridor that will protect the outstandingly remarkable values for which the River was designated Wild and Scenic; site specific considerations then need to be discussed based on that foundation/context; then a discussion of transportation and parking options must occur that will support user capacity and site specific determinations. An isolated question about supporting bus services along new routes into the park at this stage of the process is meaningless.

3. Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not?

Absolutely not!!! The concept of remote parking and shuttle services flies in the face of what the Park's own consultants advised in the congressionally mandated 1994 Alternative Transportation Modes Feasibility Study. The Study stated that "locating staging areas in remote locations would influence the following quantifiable aspects of visitor use and park management:"

--Parking Demand. The time required to travel to and from the Valley on buses would lengthen the time visitors spend making a visit to the Valley and would result in a need for additional parking spaces. --Shuttle System Fleet. More distant staging areas would require larger bus fleets to transport Valley visitors to and from the staging area. --Shuttle System Operating Costs. Larger fleets and longer travel distances required for remote staging would require greater levels of funding for operations. --Delays to Through Visitors. Visitors traveling to the Valley as part of longer trips which involve stops in other areas of the park or which involve entering Yosemite at one location and leaving from another would be inconvenienced by the need to travel to and from the valley by bus and then travel much of the same route in a private vehicle to complete their park visit. --Remote staging areas would limit visitors' ability to stop at features along the park roads for sightseeing and other activities. --Potentially higher levels of particulate and nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions would be generated by high volumes of bus travel on park roads. --Increased noise levels on park roads and in the Valley would be associated with high volumes of bus travel. "The cost, visitor confusion, visitor delay, information challenges, and management difficulties associated with operating remote valley staging areas would be substantial. In return, the benefits would be minor, consisting of moderate decreases in vehicle traffic along sections of park road that are not congested. Perhaps the greatest drawback of remote staging would be the loss of visitors' personal freedom to experience portions of Yosemite at their own pace and in their own way."

A letter to the editor perhaps stated it best: "The whole concept of elimination of individual ownership and use, in favor of group use, is at the base of many of the Park Service plans. For example, the massive invasion of the visitors, foreign and domestic, by controlled means through the use of the tour bus is creating a faceless user who no longer feels a personal connection between himself, his family and these pristine areas. He is fed our national parks much like the Monterey Aquarium'behind the glass wall of Park Service policy. In a controlled environment, he will be shown and told what the Park Service thinks is appropriate at the time. The loss of personal pride in our national parks will ultimately be devastating."

Restating the obvious: Without any clearly defined user capacity information, how can there be any meaningful discussion about remote parking and shuttle service? Any input would appear to "shoot from the hip" absent any valid context. Planners need to go back to step 1'establish a scientifically determined user capacity for the Merced River corridor that will protect the Public Comment'Merced River Plan Alternatives Development Page 14 of 21 December 12, 2011

outstandingly remarkable values for which the River was designated Wild and Scenic; site specific considerations then need to be discussed based on that foundation/context; then a discussion of transportation and parking options must occur that will support user capacity and site specific determinations. An isolated question about remote parking and shuttle service at this

stage of the process, absent supporting information, is meaningless.

(Special Note: According to park officials at Alaska's Denali National Park'per 11/09/00 email'the Park Service implemented a transit system at Denali in 1972 to "minimize the impacts of increased traffic." "The system was provided free to riders from 1972 through 1994. The bus system cost federal taxpayers about $1.6 million annually. The bus system subsidy amounted to 22% of the Park's operating budget, and as the price of running the system increased, the Park had to reduce other services to visitors as well as reduce the number of buses and the distance they travel. National Park Service funding was no longer able to cover the costs of such services and still provide necessary visitor services and adequate protection of park values. Park visitors were being asked to share in the costs associated with their visit through increased fees." Turned over to the concessionaire, bus tickets now cost $30-$40 per adult depending on distance traveled. Should this same scenario occur at Yosemite, it would effectively price out most Americans; Valley Plan research documents that the statistically typical visitor to Yosemite has a yearly income of over $100,000'evidence that park policies are already contributing to economic discrimination.)

4. If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?

How can the public respond to this very complex question when there's been no information/discussion concerning the integration of user capacity as the foundation for site specific decisions throughout the entire River Plan/River corridor and no details provided with respect to transportation or parking? By jumping straight to the concept of day use reservations, planners are sidestepping/avoiding the very difficult task of exhausting all the other options that could be explored/implemented to resolve traffic management challenges.

Implementing a day-use reservation policy would have profound implications on the gateway communities outside the park boundaries. Once user capacity in the Valley has been determined, the new Merced River Plan must also include an analysis as to how those numbers differ from historical visitor use as well as the socioeconomic impact on the surrounding region. Whether it's 10 million visitors or 3 million visitors'all must travel through one of the four corridors into the park, utilizing the services and infrastructure (e.g., water, sewer, roads) within the gateway communities. The Park has a responsibility to evaluate prospective policy changes in light of how those changes might actually advance sprawl and environmental degradation outside its boundaries. Bus access to the Park will force cash-strapped counties to consider infrastructure changes from the standpoint of road safety and maintenance, economic survival, fire and emergency measures as well as other perspectives. Local communities and governments need to be intimately involved in the decision-making process as adjacent Federal land use policy is developed. Based on information available to date, discussions concerning day-use reservations are very premature. Public Comment'Merced River Plan Alternatives Development Page 15 of 21 December 12, 2011

5. 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?

Not at this time. Based on information available to date, discussions concerning day-use permits/reservations are very premature. (See II.4)

6. What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities?

Appropriate recreation activities were previously identified in the 1980 GMP and further reinforced by the Recreation ORV definitions'resource-focused activities which enable visitors to immerse themselves in their surroundings, taking in the sights, sounds, and feel of the river and its dramatic backdrop.

Appropriate recreational activities in the "wild" segment of the Merced River Corridor would be hiking, backpacking, fishing, well-managed equestrian use, primitive camping, snow-shoeing, cross-country skiing, viewing scenery, wildlife observation, nature study, and photography; a true wilderness experience in a scenically diverse river setting with opportunities for solitude while developing a deeper relationship with nature. For example, citing some parameters from a version of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum: "Primitive settings are characterized by an unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Interaction between users is low and evidence of others is minimal. The area is managed to be essentially free of man-made "improvements" and facilities [e.g., absence of Merced Lake High Sierra Camp glamping/"glamour camping"]. Experiencing isolation from sights and sounds of humans is probable. Opportunities for independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through the application of outdoor skills abound and present high degrees of challenge and risk."

Low impact activities along the river corridor in Yosemite Valley include waterplay, sunbathing, exploring the rock formations, picnicking, fishing, bird watching, photography/videography, painting, writing or just appreciating nature and enjoying the scenery and peacefulness of the river. In addition to the river-associated activities, users like to hike on the natural trails along or near the river, bicycle on one of the paved multi-use trails in the East end, or enjoy the challenge of Yosemite's world-renowned big-wall climbing; drawn by the scenery, there are opportunities to explore and photograph the spectacular falls, float the river, and camp or picnic on its banks'or snow-shoe or cross-country ski as snow permits. Easy access by private vehicle enables visitors to enjoy pleasure driving and sightseeing, with the freedom to explore nature on their own terms, while experiencing solitude within this world-renowned environment. Appropriate infrastructure and services facilitate river-related activities but do not dominate the landscape or interfere with the natural setting that visitors have come to enjoy. Visitor use levels are appropriate so as not to contribute to crowding or congestion. There is moderate evidence of

development, human activity, and natural resource modifications that are designed to be harmonious with the natural environment; presence of others is expected and tolerated with encounters ranging from low to moderate; conventional motor vehicle use is permitted on paved, graveled, and unsurfaced roads; settings should offer a sense of independence and freedom over comfort and convenience; the challenge and risk associated with more primitive types of recreation are not very important; practice and testing of outdoor skills are important.

Unfortunately, there has been no discussion about how the Park Service plans to implement Footnote 5 of the 9th Circuit Ruling concerning facilities/services/amenities in the River corridor with supporting documentation of their importance (or not) in contributing to the outstandingly remarkable values of the River (e.g., swimming pools, gift shops, rental facilities, snack stands/food and beverage facilities, ice skating rink, etc.). Nor has there been any discussion/ analysis of the increased resource impacts that result from commercialization of recreational activities (e.g., commercial rafting, commercial bike rentals, commercial stable rides, etc.).

An additional comment as stated in the aforementioned letter to Kathleen Morse (6/1/11):

"There continue to be concerns regarding the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. Though the Camp was in use in 1987, it is located in an area classified as a potential wilderness addition which means it has to be treated as wilderness. The Wilderness Management Plan is very outdated and it is difficult to assess one Camp as part of the MRP when all High Sierra Camps are overdue for an assessment concerning their appropriateness in a wilderness area. The wilderness experience as defined by the MRP is laced with terminology such as "undeveloped settings," "independence," "self-reliance," "solitude," and "primitive." However, the Merced Lake High Sierra Camp is described as "an opportunity to experience the remote backcountry in relative comfort of tent cabins with wood floors, beds, fresh home-cooked meals, and hot showers;" "sack lunches also may be purchased;" "every effort is made to accommodate advance requests due to dietary restrictions such as food allergies, vegetarian or vegan diets." This does not appear to be consistent with "undeveloped settings," "independence," "self-reliance," and "primitive." Additionally, the Court raised concerns about a "dining hall accommodating 70 people" in this Segment. The Draft Report further acknowledges that "the majority of stock use in the Merced River corridor is for the administrative or concessioner supply purposes in support of recreational activities or sites (e.g., NPS trail maintenance crews or Merced Lake High Sierra Camp)." And helicopter use is required for removal of residual from the septic system and has been used to reinforce the water supply. Though the High Sierra Camps are very popular and only available by lottery with efforts underway by the Yosemite Conservancy to declare them "historic" so as to pre-empt any discussions of removal, there needs to be an honest and objective analysis as to whether they are consistent with the Recreation value and are to be considered as such. They are also an example of how commercialization of "primitive wilderness camping" increase the impacts on the land

(i.e., human-built environment, meadow and trail deterioration, on-going maintenance issues, etc.) while creating additional opportunities for conflict between users (i.e., intrusion of helicopters, stock use vs. hikers, etc.)."

IV. Land Uses and Associated Developments

1. How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation?

At present, it appears that 80% of the development footprint (3 sprawling lodging complexes, campgrounds, Housekeeping Camp, elementary school, NPS and DNC employee housing, post office, etc.) in the Valley is in support of the 20% of visitors and residents who stay overnight in the park. Meanwhile, there's been no discussion of Footnote 5 and which of these facilities contribute to the ORVs of the Merced River corridor and which do not and will be removed. And according to the Draft ORV Conditions Baseline Report, existing Valley visitation surveys do not distinguish between day use and overnight visitors so it is unclear what the "current mix" really refers to. Are commuting employees counted as "day visitors?" Are vendors counted as "day visitors?" What about overnight lodging guests who come early and haven't yet checked in, or stay late after having checked out of their lodging'are they interim "day visitors?"

And at what point does affordability enter into the discussion. According to the recently rescinded Yosemite Valley Plan (has this information been updated??): "It is generally believed that low-income and minority visitors to the park are under-represented in the total visitor population. However, the overnight accommodation and recreation patterns of low income and minority park visitors have not been studied in detail. As a result, the impacts on low-income and minority overnight and day visitors cannot be analyzed quantitatively. It may be assumed that visitation patterns of low-income visitors tend toward the more inexpensive methods: day visits, camping, housekeeping, tent cabin rentals?" Additionally, "the largest percentage of visitors to Yosemite National Park (26%) have an annual household income greater than $100,000. The smallest proportion of visitors (5%) have an annual household income of less than $20,000. By contrast, in the State of California the largest percent of the population (37%) has an annual income below $20,000. The data illustrate that people from low-income households are largely underrepresented in the population of visitors to Yosemite? This is true on both a statewide and regional basis." National parks are publicly funded by taxpayers and owned by the American people; regardless of the number of visitors, the parks will always be funded. Transforming our national parks into concessionaire resorts and elitist enclaves creates inherent conflicts of interest ranging from capacity issues to preservation to revenue generation. Has the goal of the visitor experience at Yosemite transitioned from one of encouraging the public to spend TIME in direct interaction with the resource to instead spending MONEY at the resource?

Past plans claim to be responding to "visitor demand for expanded or additional services." The new Merced River Plan must set objective guidelines for what services and facilities are needed'moving beyond the "want" vs. "need" debate and instead focusing on what is most protective of the river corridor; an opportunity to experience a Yosemite free from the "fragments of suburbia" and "being in relationship with Yosemite's resources" not to mention affordable to the average American If a visitor is desirous of resort-style services and activities, there are facilities in the gateways outside the Park that can accommodate that lifestyle. The Park's response to Footnote 5 also must be part of this discussion.

And let's talk about user capacity. The only discussion of user capacity thus far was a spring workshop where "experts" provided an overview of how user capacity was determined in other locations with academic exercises to prove to workshop attendees how difficult it will be for planners to make user capacity decisions at Yosemite. But to date, the public has no idea what planners intend to do'hence it is impossible to provide meaningful input to this question. And as referenced earlier, this situation appears to go against the Settlement Agreement which states the user capacity experts will be "participating in the?workshops in order to help frame the discussions that take place so that user capacity is integrated throughout the planning effort."

2. How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?

What is considered a "river value?" Family auto-camping in Yosemite Valley can certainly be considered a "river value" since it is an activity deemed appropriate within the Merced River corridor as part of the Recreation Outstandingly Remarkable River Value. Following the 1997 flood, there was a 40% reduction in family auto-camping opportunities in Yosemite Valley'hence it is a "value" that has been allowed to degrade rather than protected and enhanced. Acknowledging the value of camping as a resource-focused activity, the GMP authorized 756 campsites in Yosemite Valley of which there would be 684 "family friendly" auto campsites, 14 group campsites, and 58 walk-in sites; the GMP number already accounted for the removal of 116 sites from along the banks of the Merced River. Rescinded plans appeared to be advocating for more walk-in or walk-to sites which may appeal to the strong and healthy but which would be discouraging for the disabled as well as families camping with infants and young children or with grandparents. There are plenty of opportunities in the back-country for walk-in or walk-to sites but drive-in camping is the introductory activity for the novice outdoorsman. Furthermore, Interior Secretary Salazar and NPS Director Jarvis have both indicated a focus on encouraging young people to experience their national parks. An outreach event here or there may raise awareness but until the young person can enjoy the Park with his family in a manner that is not too expensive or too intimidating, his/her interest will not be long-lasting. Family friendly auto camping bridges that gap.

As stated earlier, user capacity decisions comprise a 3-part determination: without adverse impact on ORVs and free flow of River; without adverse impact on the "quality" of the recreation experience; without adverse impact on public health and safety. With respect to the the "quality" of the camping experience. Apparently, campers were not specifically surveyed so planners could evaluate how visitors view the "quality" of the frontcountry camping experience in Yosemite Valley and within the Merced River corridor; description of campground settings should have been part of the setting attributes; research that "quantifies" the camping experience as well as reveals campsite conditions should have been completed; and there should have been a discussion of the extent of Facilities/Services/Amenities that support the camping experience. And finally, there were no management considerations with respect to how the camping experience would be protected and enhanced since it appears to be an activity that's been allowed to decrease/degrade since the River's designation. Additionally, there's been no discussion concerning public safety and the number of visitors that can be accommodated in the far east end of the Valley, yet still within the safety limits of an emergency evacuation. Without that back-up information and analysis, how can the public provide meaningful input as to numbers and location of campsites.

Pending adequate study of Valley resources and recreation, there needs to be robust public discussion concerning the reopening of Upper Rivers and Lower Rivers Campgrounds, the Group Campground, and more of Lower Pines Campground to family auto-camping as per the original intent of the 1997 flood money to return these flood-damaged facilities to pre-flood condition. Campers are self-contained requiring few support services and minimal permanent infrastructure. Unlike year-round facilities, campgrounds are only used seasonally allowing an opportunity for the resources to regenerate. And should visitor impacts be the excuse for failing to put all camping options on the table, it is important to remember the Draft ORV Conditions Assessment Report acknowledges (as part of the Biologic ORV) that there is insufficient research tying high visitor use to observed conditions along the River. Hence, there is a paucity of information for the public to consider in providing input other than their justified outrage that the flood-damaged campsites were never returned to their pre-flood condition per the emergency congressional flood appropriation.

One final comment: relocating campsites outside of Yosemite Valley will only exacerbate the day visitor situation as those who were unable to secure a Valley campsite will travel into the Valley for the day to enjoy the River and its environs.

3. What types of services and amenities are necessary for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced River Wild and Scenic River corridor?

Without any idea about the Park's plans for user capacity, it is impossible for the public to provide input on how that user capacity will be "managed."

Meanwhile, there has been no discussion about how the Park Service plans to implement Footnote 5 of the 9th Circuit Ruling concerning facilities/services/amenities in the River corridor with supporting documentation of their importance (or not) in contributing to the outstandingly remarkable values of the River (e.g., swimming pools, gift shops, rental facilities, snack stands/food and beverage facilities, ice skating rink, etc.). Nor has there been any discussion/analysis of the increased resource impacts that result from commercialization of recreational activities (e.g., commercial rafting, commercial bike rentals, commercial stable rides, etc.).

See III.6 and IV.1 above for additional comments.

4. How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley?

It would seem that a reduction in the development footprint (i.e., facilities and services) would result in a reduction in need for administrative function. Meanwhile, there's been no discussion of Footnote 5 and what facilities will be removed. At this point, insufficient information has been provided to enable meaningful input.

5. How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met?

This is a very broad-based, philosophical question. There is some overlap with IV.1 above with respect to prioritizing land use. However, additional information is needed to enable meaningful input.

SUMMARY

This exercise has been very frustrating and disappointing. The questions are all over the board'some seemingly requiring a regurgitation of previously discussed issues, some requiring such a degree of technical expertise they could serve as problem statements for graduate theses, and some broad-based essay questions without backup documentation/analysis provided to assist the respondent. It had been hoped that by the time planners started making decisions on alternatives that the public would be able to have somewhat of an understanding of how the "dots" connect and that there would be justification and back-up provided in reviewing the proposed management considerations. How do management options relate to/reinforce the NPS Management Policies, the 1980 GMP, the MRP Scoping Summary, the ORV definitions, the ORV Baseline Condition Assessment Report, and Footnote 5 of the Ninth Circuit Ruling? Do

each of these documents continue to build on the other so as to lead toward reasoned decision-making? Is user capacity a concept that the public understands and endorses or does user capacity remain in the shadows as a threat for locking people out or "quotas" as played in the press? The process seemed to be headed in the right direction until last May but now seems to resemble scattershot'throw everything on the board and see what sticks?

The topic of user capacity and its integration throughout the planning effort remains of critical concern. Though the identified user capacity experts have apparently been in meetings with park staff, there is no information available to the public as to what occurred at these meetings. What recommendations did the experts make? What recommendations did Park planners accept or reject and why? Can the experts post their recommendations followed by the planning staff's responses on

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Correspondence ID: 46 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Sierra Club Yosemite Committee Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,13,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389 Attention: Public Comment Wild and Scenic Merced River Plan

Dear Mr. Neubacher: 13 Dec. 2011

The following comments are submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee. We hope they will be of value in developing a new Wild and Scenic Merced River Plan.

The Sierra Club strongly recommends and supports implementing a day use reservation system for east Valley destinations during high use periods with an east Valley parking permit system, and making this a foundational element of the new MRP. Implementing the system initially as a voluntary program, using current bar code technology, would familiarize visitors with an opportunity to guarantee entry to east Valley during high use spring and summer periods weeks or months in advance of the visit. The voluntary system would still allow first come first serve entry for those unfamiliar or unwilling to use the reservation system. However, visitors without east Valley parking reservations would be denied entry if there were no parking spaces available in east Valley. Signage should be installed on approach routes advising arriving visitors without advanced parking

reservations when east Valley day use parking is full and unavailable. Reserved parking would be adjusted daily as determined by request and identified as reserved parking only. The day use reservation system should be combined with additional Valley Shuttles to facilitate visitor movement around the Valley, reducing the need for private automobile use. Preventing resource damage and improving the visitor experience by regulating and limiting day use numbers is an action that should be clearly expressed as a foundational element in the new MRP.

The Sierra Club does not oppose a modest increase in campsites, including group campsites, in areas impacted by current use. However, we oppose reopening the Rivers campsites and support restoring the area to a natural condition. We also oppose any new campgrounds in west Valley. A new campground could be developed at the current DNC stables area, the equestrian training center east of the Ahwahnee, or as an additional loop in North Pines Campground. The Sierra Club does not support providing hookups for large recreational vehicles in Yosemite. The Sierra Club supports banning campfires during high air pollution periods of the year.

The Sierra Club supports removal of the Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee bridges and berm and rerouting the trails.

The Sierra Club supports a reduction in the size of the Merced High Sierra Camp and in the amenities provided. We also support incorporating High Sierra Camp use into the trail head quotas.

The Sierra Club supports retaining the back packers campground at Little Yosemite Valley and opposes dispersed back country camping in this heavily used back country area.

The Sierra Club supports discontinuance of the removal of large woody debris from the River to retain it as natural condition as possible.

At the Camp 6 parking lot, the Sierra Club supports relocating parking nearest the river to more appropriate locations in Yosemite Village and restoring the area to as natural a condition as possible. Removal of DNC headquarters, the garage, and other obsolete and no longer needed NPS infrastructure would provide areas for parking to be relocated from the current Camp 6 site. The Sierra Club opposes any net additional day use parking in the Valley.

The Sierra Club supports removal of the housekeeping units in or near riparian areas and relocation of the units to more appropriate non sensitive areas where available.

With regard to paddling and floating, the Sierra Club supports Option 18A in the planning workbook if it includes a substantial reduction in the current level of paddling and floating: "Allow paddling and floating in a limited section of the river that has minimal resource impact concerns. Allow both private and commercial use. Require permits for all paddling vessels (both private and commercial) within season. Limit the number of both private and commercial vessels to a specified capacity (boats per day or at one time). No restrictions on swimming and water play throughout the summer. Designate put-in and take-out points (and stopping points along the way)."

The Sierra Club suggests considering realignment of South Side Drive at the Chapel straight to the perimeter of Sentinel meadow but away from the rock fall zone and SSD's original alignment. The current alignment of the nearly 40 foot wide road and bike trail cuts through the center of the meadow and seriously impacts the meadows hydrology and the Yosemite Falls view shed. We also suggest considering rerouting the current road alignment through Stoneman meadow out of the meadow and closer to existing Camp Curry infrastructure, and converting the road from Stoneman Bridge to the Camp 6 intersection to a bike trail. This would protect the solitude of this natural river corridor floodplain and help ameliorate the difficult traffic problems at the Camp 6 intersection.

The Sierra Club supports redoing the Yosemite Lodge intersection with a pedestrian under crossing or over crossing to eliminate congestion at this vehicle pedestrian intersection. An on site solution might include lowering NSD as necessary to provide material for a berm and pedestrian over crossing. Road grade material could be used to construct an aesthetic, architecturally appropriate pedestrian intersection that would obscure or minimize most or all west bound traffic from the iconic view shed from the Lodge. Rerouting NSD south around the Lodge even farther into the river corridor, a solution proposed in previous plans, is not an acceptable solution to this problem.

The Sierra Club recommends removing roadside parking along the most scenic eastern portion of El Capitan meadow. Replacement parking should be located along North Side Drive west of the meadow out of the view shed, and on the old road alignment and parking area north of El Cap meadow away from the meadow and out of the scenic view shed. Shoulder parking along NSD at El Cap meadow destroys both the meadow and the view shed.

The Sierra Club recommends removing inappropriate, dilapidated, and obsolete infrastructure in Yosemite Valley wherever possible. Some examples include but not limited to: The ice rink at Curry. DNC corporate headquarters in Yosemite village Obsolete NPS warehouses and other dilapidated buildings and structures at both the Village and Curry. DNC stables and related housing and infrastructure. The Sierra Club supports removing or relocating all dilapidated and substandard NPS and DNC housing at both Curry and Yosemite Village and removing as much of it as possible out of the Valley. The Sierra Club supports implementation of management options that remove or relocate infrastructure and visitor activities that impact sensitive resource or cultural areas. The Park Service should consider management objectives and actions that increase resource protection and improve the visitor enjoyment and appreciation of the natural attractions of Yosemite's scenic beauty. Limiting day use

visitation during high use will be an essential action to attain these goals and will help to mitigate many of the historic resource and visitor use issues along the Wild and Scenic Merced River Corridor. This issue must be addressed and included as a foundational element of the new MRP.

The Sierra Club supports the goal of this plan to "provide the river's ability to shape the landscape by reducing impediments to free-flow, improving geologic/hydrologic processes, restoring floodplains and meadows and protecting water quality." Protection of the river and associated meadows and riparian areas is of the utmost importance to the Sierra Club and our members. The Sierra Club supports the National Park Service's efforts to protect and restore flood plains and meadows in the Merced River system including Stoneman Meadow, Chapel meadow, the former River Campground area and the Camp 6 parking area. We suggest removing unnecessary structures, roads and parking lots from the riparian corridor and redesigning any bridges and other structures that impede the natural free-flow and other hydrological processes. Any new structures or campgrounds should not have significant impact on riparian areas or other natural resources.

Thanks for listening Alan Carlton, Chair Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee

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Correspondence ID: 47 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,13,2011 19:08:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: As someone who spends virtually every weekend in Yosemite National Park from October through May, the resulting actions that come from these proposals is of huge significance to me.

In my order of preference of actions to be taken: 1. Pedestrian overpasses or underground walkways in the highly congested Lodge area crossing and Yosemite Village area. 2. Increasing camping options and hopefully separating RV camping from tent camping. Keeping camping in already used spaces without encroaching on "untouched" wilderness would be preferred. 3. Maintaining dirt pullouts throughout the valley loop in order to access many of the climbing areas that are not commonly used or known.

Correspondence ID: 48 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 13:19:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV)

that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 49 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 13:23:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing

the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 50 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 13:30:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering

areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 51 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil's Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don't seem practical and won't work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed's Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

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Correspondence ID: 52 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

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* Please cut & paste the text below in the the second field * Alter or add as you like *

****

As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Comments: Please preserve rock climbing / bouldering in Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 53 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and

Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 54 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: N/A Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s

Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 55 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Brainvise Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 13:47:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: - Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 56 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook: - Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions. - Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created. - Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river. - Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds. - Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion. - Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity. - Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work. - Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas

that planners might not know about. - Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts: - The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley. - Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed. - The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point. - A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas. - The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 57 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 13:52:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing

the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 58 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 13:55:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering

areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 59 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long and significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

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parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 60 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Access Fund Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: - Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 21: I prefer a hybrid approach of A,B and C. Some boardwalks could be provided near the road to absorb the bulk of the visitors. Removing some vegetation (trees) is a reasonable way to keep a lot of visitors on the boardwalks while still gaining the amazing views of El Cap. Option D (disallowing parking) is a non-workable solution for climbers as it would greatly impact access to El Cap. Furthermore, El Cap Meadow is a very important resource for climbers from all over the world to gather and share the views of El Cap, watch their friends that may be on the wall, or just generally bask in the glory of El Cap. It is important to maintain access to this resource. I believe that by allowing good access on boardwalks to the bulk of the visitors should protect the meadow while still allowing access for those that wish to venture from the boardwalks.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders and climbs routes in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long and significant history in Yosemite Valley.

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- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by climbers for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 61 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 62 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 14:15:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 63 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 14:17:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to

improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 64 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 14:21:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use

reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 65 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 14:28:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 66 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 14:41:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 67 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: The Access Fund Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who visits Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Climbing requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there many climbing areas (Royal Arches, Washington Column, etc) that are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who climb because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the climbing areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 68 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 14:54:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: - Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 69 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 14:56:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: - Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the

river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 70 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber frequents Yosemite, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 71 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Access Fund Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 15:04:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 72 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 15:05:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 73 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 15:11:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the

lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 74 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 15:15:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas,

including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 75 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Yosemite National Park Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 15:23:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may

eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 76 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 15:24:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

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- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 77 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: BMC Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: - Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value

(ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

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- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 78 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

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the level of recreational parking is critical.

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- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

- I would like to see more campsites that do not accomodate RVs, but only tent camping but with easy access to car.

Correspondence ID: 79 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: - Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 80 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 16:06:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use

parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 81 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 16:15:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at

the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 82 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 16:17:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our

recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 83 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 17:03:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the

Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 84 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

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- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 85 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

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* Please cut & paste the text below in the the second field * Alter or add as you like *

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As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

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- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 86 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 17:53:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

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Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 87 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: - Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

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- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: please help keep climbing alive in yosemite

Correspondence ID: 88 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 18:12:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the

lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who grew up bouldering in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 89 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 18:27:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas,

including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 90 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 18:32:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may

eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 91 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 92 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: - Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil's Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don't seem practical and won't work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed's Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

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Correspondence ID: 93 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Touro University Wilderness Medicine Club Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 18:47:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may

eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 94 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 19:28:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: See below for comments.

Comments: Dec. 14, 2011

Superintendent? Yosemite National Park? Attn: Merced River Plan

I found that this was the hardest plan that I have ever had to comment on for numerous reasons. There was a substantial amount of material to comment on with some of the materials being site specific with great detail while other more important issues were discussed very briefly. In addition, this plan came on the heels of so many other plans that were put out this year that frankly, I am burned out trying to read and comment on them all. I feel that with this plan being so important, that there should have been a much longer comment period so people could extensively go over the plan. Therefore, for the above reasons, I feel that I can only concentrate on some of the issues.

I believe that the issues of carrying capacity, transportation, and parking are of primary importance to the Merced River Plan. Unfortunately, I feel that these topics should have been addressed in more detail. While establishing a carrying capacity is important for the future protection of Yosemite, I currently have no concrete ideas on what kind of plan should be implemented. I would like a future planning section dedicated to this issue to come out with ideas on possible scenarios, such as a straight reservation system, car permit system, reservation and first come first served system or any combination and how the system would be designed to eliminate the scalping issues that were seen with the Halfdome permits and campground reservations.

In the follow section I will comment on the issues of traffic, parking, transportation and their interrelationship.

PARKING

Over the years traffic jams have grown increasingly larger and last longer. I believe that this is not only due to the increase in visitation but also the decrease in parking. There has been a systematic reduction in parking spaces and the removal of formal and informal parking spots through out the past few years. This reduction in spaces has caused traffic jams on busy days when

people are having to circle around the park looking for a spot to park.

On the Yosemite Lodge Concept map, it was noted that there would be an increase in parking around the Lodge. As a guest who stays at the Yosemite Lodge, the ability to get a parking spot is extremely difficult at times and we have had to leave our car in another area of the park until the day use people left. Any plan for this area needs to include parking that is restricted for guest use only and then have parking that is available for the general public to use while eating at the Lodge or using other Lodge facilities.

To accommodate visitors, more parking should be added by converting spaces currently used for other purposes. In addition, a few small parking lots should be added in areas that have minimal visual impact. At no point should a large parking lot be added to the west valley area and the suggested parking facility at Taft Toe should be discarded. Also, I am highly against using curbs to delineate parking areas for they add a city like flavor to the park.

TRAFFIC/TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

In addition to increased parking, there are other traffic management changes that could be used. The closing of Sentinel Bridge during busy times should be stopped. People who wish to exit the park are forced to drive down to Stoneman Bridge. This causes traffic build up not only at that intersection but also impacts the intersection at Camp 6 and the Sentinel Drive/ Northside Drive Intersection.

The intersection at Camp 6 is dangerous because of the interaction between pedestrians, bicyclists and cars. Of the two options for this intersection, I believe that the option with the T intersection would be the best choice. You would have separation of pedestrians and bicycle traffic and a means to improve pedestrian crossing. The roundabout option had two issues that caused me to eliminate that choice. One, roundabouts are not commonly used in the United States and I have experienced the confusion that happens when one is installed and, they take up a much larger area. Two, this option would required the construction of an underpass. I feel that underpasses are not in line with keeping to the natural feel of a National Park and should not be used in this or any other location.

The Sentinel Drive/Northside Drive intersection needs to be changed to all way stops or have a signal that could be used during the busy season. Having a signal would be my second choice since traffic signals have a visual impact and when visiting a park, I don't want to feel like I am in a city

The intersection of Northside Drive and Yosemite Lodge has become even more dangerous since the completion of the Yosemite Falls project. The removal of the parking at the falls has meant an increase of pedestrians crossing that intersection to get to the falls. This has also increased the risk of pedestrian - bike traffic - car conflicts. Having a bus staging and visitor parking area off Northside Drive near Camp 4 would improve visitor safety.

Another way to decrease traffic jams would be to increase the shuttle system. The Yosemite Valley shuttle system should be expanded with stops in the Pohono Bridge area, Bridalveil Falls, Valley View, Cathedral Beach and Sentinel Beach added to the west end shuttle route. A shuttle stop at Tunnel View could be added to this shuttle route or that stop added to the shuttle route from Wawona to the Valley. A shuttle route to Glacier Point should also be added during the busy season. A transfer stop at Chinquapin should be considered. This way people coming from either the Valley or Wawona could transfer from those shuttle routes to the Glacier Point route and vise versa. However, this should be a transfer stop ONLY and this area should NOT be developed into a satellite parking area.

In this next section, I will comment on other issues:

Increasing over night visitation should be considered. By increasing Valley Lodging you can cut down on the amount of day use traffic and it would also allow more people to experience the pleasure of staying in Yosemite Valley. While I would like to see some of the hard sided lodging that was removed after the flood replaced, I feel that this type of lodging is inconsistent with the Merced River Plan. To increase overnight visitation with less impact, I would support the addition of more camp sites. However, these sites should remain in the east Valley and campsites in the west Valley should not be considered. One possibility is restoring some of the campsites in the former Upper and Lower River campgrounds. Site should be centralized such that they would not be right next to the river to protect riparian zones and in such a manner that there is little visual impact near the roads. If the stables are removed, than that area should be considered for additional campsites.

I would also like to see opportunities for increased biking through out the Valley. In the past we have biked the loop from Yosemite Lodge around to Swinging Bridge, but stopped because it is dangerous to ride along the roads.

While I am against too much increase in infrastructure, I would support the addition of bathrooms through out the Valley. This would help eliminate the heath hazards to both humans and wild life.

In the past, there has been talk about removing numerous bridges in Yosemite Valley. The current plan calls for the removal of Sugar Pine Bridge. While the bridge inhibits the normal flow of the river, the historical significance of the bridge has to be considered. Other means to restore flow should be investigated.

While Yosemite's meadows need protection, I have found boardwalks to a visual intrusion on the surrounding beauty. I am against having boardwalks constructed in El Cap and Leidig Meadows. Instead, temporary rail fences could be utilized to direct use to less impacted areas and/or formal trails should be established.

The ability to access the river is essential to the Yosemite experience. Areas should be established to allow river access in numerous areas. Pa'rus Trail in Zion National Park is a good example on how to manage river access in an area with high usage.

Although this is not part of the Merced River,or any of the current plans that have been been put up for comment, I believe that a more extensive Leave No Trace program should be instituted. LNT is an important part of protecting the resources of our National Parks. I visit numerous NPS units every year and have found that Yosemite is the most abused of all the units that I have ever visited. Many visitors to Yosemite are not aware of how to properly treat Yosemite and they are causing damage to the park environment by not staying on trails, taking things, not respecting wildlife, dumping trash everywhere, etc. They are also affecting other visitor's ability to enjoy the park by those activities and, also by not understanding that many people come to enjoy the sounds of nature and not to hear loud music playing. The principles of LNT should not be delegated to a small section in the park guide but should be more visible to visitors. The LNT section of the guide should be extended to a full page and/or a separate pamphlet be given out at the gates. While the shuttles do have some LNT ads, posters could be placed in restrooms, lodging and shops. Education is an important means to protect our national treasures.

I would like to thank everyone that was involved in the planning process and the time they spent in creating the workbook and subsequent maps. I appreciate the efforts of those who put together the Webinar because this was the only way that I could participate in a meeting. I apologize to everyone who put in so much effort in this plan, that due to other obligations, I was not able to examine the plan and comment as extensively as I would have wished to.

Thank you for the opportunity to make suggestions and comments.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 95 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Betabase Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil's Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don't seem practical and won't work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed's Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

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Correspondence ID: 96 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 20:38:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: - Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

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- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

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- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

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- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

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- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 97 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 20:41:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 98 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 20:46:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are

considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 99 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 20:52:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 100 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 20:56:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the

river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 101 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: National Parks Conservation Association Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 21:01:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The National Parks Conservation Association advocates for a balance between resource protection and quality visitor experiences. See comments below.

Comments: To Whom It May Concern: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the alternative development process for the Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan. The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has long supported the park's efforts to create a strong and protective plan. We commend the effort, time, thought and extensive research that the park administration and staff undertook in this process. Since 1919, the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System for our children and grandchildren. Today, we have 600,000 members and supporters nationwide who visit and care deeply about our national parks. NPCA has found the alternatives development workbook to be an innovative and useful resource that provided an organized process to comment on each consideration for the sections of the river. The public workshops for this scoping period were exceptional and the opportunity for stakeholders to attend webinars has provided much more access to people all over the world. These should continue to be used whenever possible. In addition to the specific comments outlined below, we encourage the park to expand and implement as much public transportation as possible throughout Yosemite Valley and to Tunnel View in an effort to relieve traffic congestion from private vehicles. We also encourage the park to support efforts at expanding public

transportation throughout the region and to partner with the gateway communities on this and other incentives that will help with the flow of traffic in and around the park. We also urge the park to provide as much specific information as possible about user capacity to the public before draft alternatives are finalized. There was an incredible amount of information available around the user capacity workshops and we look forward to knowing what any limits might be. We do hope that all of the research and hard work that has been done around understanding how to move people and provide information will mean that limits are never reached.

SEGMENT 1: Management Considerations and Potential Management Options

Merced Lake Backpackers' Campground: Use Levels High levels of use affect Wilderness character and the Wilderness experience integral to the Recreation ORV in this segment. Management Option: Reduce use by lowering quotas for trailheads that lead to the Merced Lake area. Retain Backpackers' Campground so that visitor use is concentrated.

Merced Lake High Sierra Camp: Wilderness and ORV Impacts Merced Lake High Sierra Camp affects Wilderness character and the Wilderness experience integral to the Recreation ORV in this segment and is a visual impact on the Scenery ORV. Management Option: Reduce capacity and amenities when feasible. Continue Best Management Practices being used now (zero waste management, delineated pathways, etc.).

Visitor Use Management Program Segment 1 Wilderness Trails: High Encounter Rates High encounter rates on trails between Little Yosemite Valley and Merced Lake indicate Wilderness experience integral to Recreation ORV in this segment is impacted temporally and spatially. Management Option: Incorporate High Sierra Camp use into trailhead quotas.

Recreational User Conflicts Recreational user conflicts between hikers and stock users has been highlighted in public comment and has implications for visitor experience and the Recreation ORV in this segment. Most of the concern pertains to stock impacts, including concentrations of manure, on trails. Management Options: Reduce the extent of trails maintained for stock in this area and use helicopters instead of stock to reduce user conflicts when possible and in the least-invasive way possible.

Little Yosemite Valley Backpackers' Campground: Crowding Crowding at Little Yosemite Valley Campground impacts Wilderness character and the Wilderness experience integral to the Recreation ORV in this segment. Management Options: Reduce trailhead quota 25%; retain composting toilet. Also retain Backpackers' Campground so that visitor use is concentrated in order to protect resources and address human waste concerns.

SEGMENT 2.1: Management Considerations and Potential Management Options

East YOSE Valley Camping Demand Public comment indicated a desire to have more camping opportunities in Yosemite Valley. Management Option: New campsites in the valley should be restricted to areas that are already developed. Alternative options for camping outside of the valley should be considered first when feasible.

Ecological and Natural Resource Values Clarks Bridge to El Cap Bridge: Large Woody Debris Management Long-term removal of large woody debris from the river to facilitate boating, between Clark's Bridge and El Cap Bridge, has reduced channel complexity and compromised riparian structure and aquatic habitat.

Management Option: Actively restore large woody debris or use engineered log jams where there is a lack of channel complexity, such as up-stream of Stoneman Bridge.

Riparian Zone: Campsites High visitor use at Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds has resulted in vegetation trampling and riverbank erosion, impacting both water quality and riparian habitat. Excess erosion is caused by high flows on bare soil. Additionally, the proximity of campsites to the water precludes riparian vegetation development.

Management Option: Relocate or remove campsites (where possible), that are within the ordinary high water mark and the riparian zone. Design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values Cultural ORV: Visitor Use and Infrastructure Intensive visitor use and infrastructure are co-located with specifically defined culturally significant plant populations. This can cause trampling and disturbance to ethnographic resources.

Management Option: Relocate visitor use areas where feasible to remove potential threats and disturbances to traditional cultural practices and values. Partner with traditional practitioners to restore areas important for traditional and spiritual use including conducting ongoing consultation and data collection and regular condition assessment monitoring.

Land Uses and Associated Developments Sugar Pine Bridge/Ahwahnee Bridge/Road Berm: Free-Flowing Condition Sugar Pine Bridge severely impacts the free-flowing condition of the Merced River and causes localized impacts to hydrologic function.

Management Option: Avoid removal of Sugar Pine Bridge, consider alternative ways to address the problems.

SEGMENT 2.2: Management Considerations and Potential Management Options

Ecological and Natural Resource Values Housekeeping Camp: Riparian and Flood Plain Impacts Several Housekeeping Camp units are located in the two to ten year floodplains and impede hydrologic function. Additionally, high visitor use at the camp has resulted in vegetation trampling and riverbank erosion, impacting both water quality and riparian vegetation. Excess erosion is caused by high flows over parking areas, around tent cabins and down roadways and foot trails. Management Option: Strategically remove up to 93 lodging units currently located within the riparian area. Where possible, relocate these lodging units to another more resilient location within Yosemite Valley. Replace riprap with bioengineered stabilization.

Upper and Lower Rivers Campground Areas: 1997 Flood Impacts This area is critical to providing hydrologic connectivity Ahwahnee and Stoneman Meadows; however, it is currently not functioning as a healthy riparian and floodplain ecosystem due to lost topography (graded landscape and filled drainages), compacted soils, existing (amphitheater) and abandoned infrastructure, and invasive plant infestations.

Management Option: Provide visitor use opportunities and access (such as camping, parking, and picnic areas) to only the northern portion of the former campgrounds, away from the riparian and floodplain ecosystem. Restore eroded riverbanks and riparian corridor. Delineate river access points in resilient locations.

Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values Cultural ORV: Visitor Use Impacts Visitor uses like hiking, pack stock use, camping, theft, and vandalism have adversely affected some archeological sites potentially affecting the integrity of the Yosemite Valley Archeological District. Management Option: Relocate visitor use areas where practicable to avoid ongoing threats and disturbances. Also stabilize sites where practicable to prevent additional loss of data. Construct fencing or other deterrent to discourage visitor activities on sensitive locations within the sites. Conduct regular condition assessment monitoring.

Visitor Use Management Program Valley: Camping Demand Management Option: Focus on identifying new campground locations or expanding existing campgrounds inside the park but outside of Yosemite Valley.

Camp 6 Intersection: Congestion Throughout the peak summer season, significant delays in outbound traffic flow occur at the intersection of the Camp 6 parking lot and Northside Drive.

Management Option: Design a roundabout (and a pedestrian under-crossing only if necessary) to address intersection performance.

SEGMENT 2.3: Management Considerations and Potential Management Options

Ecological and Natural Resource Values Leidig Meadow: Informal Trail Impacts Informal trails in Leidig Meadow cause habitat fragmentation and impact the Biological ORV. Management Option: Remove social trails and restore meadows. Install boardwalks to prevent future impacts. Fence bike path on north side of Swinging Bridge and place signs to educate visitors about human impacts to meadows.

Swinging Bridge: Riparian Impacts Visitor use at the Swinging Bridge Designated Picnic Area exceeds the design capacity. Trampling and soil compaction have resulted in riverbank erosion and loss of vegetative cover throughout the picnic area.

Management Option: Redesign picnic area in its current location to better manage visitor use. Identify additional parking on the south side of South Side Drive. Designate the area as a formal river access point, fence off sensitive areas, redirect use to more resilient areas, and reestablish riparian vegetation. Remove riprap and replace with brush layering (bioengineering) to promote the establishment of riparian vegetation.

Visitor Use Management Program Yosemite Valley: Paddling and Floating Public comments suggest expanding paddling and floating to include a longer stretch of the Merced River in Yosemite Valley. Other comments suggest variations on allowing or prohibiting commercial or private paddling and floating.

Management Option: Allow paddling and floating in a limited section of the river that has minimal resource impact concerns. Allow both private and commercial use. Require permits for all paddling vessels (both private and commercial) within season. Limit the number of both private and commercial vessels to a specified capacity (boats per day or at one time). No restrictions on swimming and water play throughout the summer. Designate put-in and take-out points (and stopping points along the way).

Land Uses and Associated Developments Yosemite Lodge: Intersection Congestion Throughout the peak summer season, significant delays in outbound traffic flow are experienced at the pedestrian crossing from Yosemite Lodge to Lower Yosemite Falls. Management Option: Implement an electronically controlled intersection for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Valley: Camping Demand Public comment indicated a desire to have more camping opportunities in Yosemite Valley.

Management Option: Fence off sensitive areas, redirect use to more resilient areas and reestablish riparian vegetation. Remove riprap and replace with brush layering (bioengineering) to promote the establishment of riparian vegetation.

SEGMENT 2.4: Management Considerations and Potential Management Options

Visitor Use Management Program West of Pohono Bridge: River Access There are no designated river access points in this reach; visitor experience and resource protection are not optimal under existing conditions.

Management Option: Designate river access and use boulders to limit parking in unpaved parking areas.

Valley: Camping Demand Public comment indicated a desire to have more camping opportunities in Yosemite Valley.

Management Option: Same as previous comments about valley camping.

Ecological and Natural Resource Values El Cap Meadow: Informal Social Trails Informal trails and vegetation trampling in the El Cap Meadow negatively impact native plant species and fragment habitat integral to the Biological ORV.

Management Option: Use restoration fencing to limit foot traffic into the meadow and designate appropriate access routes using boardwalks and viewing platforms and selectively remove vegetation that is blocking roadside views of El Capitan.

Land Uses and Associate d Developments Cathedral Beach Picnic Area: High Visitor Use The Cathedral Beach Designated Picnic Area is affected negatively by high visitor use, exceeding the design of the existing infrastructure. The resulting loss of riparian vegetation contributes to riverbank erosion.

Management Option: Redesign picnic area to better manage the level of visitor use and designate the area as a formal river access point, fence off sensitive areas, redirect use to more resilient areas and reestablish riparian vegetation.

Sentinel Beach Picnic Area: Visitor Experience The Sentinel Beach picnic area is not well-delineated to provide for optimal visitor experience and resource protection. Elements of rafting operations, such as idling buses, conflict with visitors' picnic experience.

Management Option: Redesign picnic area in its current location to accommodate picnicking and rafting; formalize vehicle access and parking; designate river access.

SEGMENT 4: Management Considerations and Potential Management Options

Ecological and Natural Resource Value Greenmeyer Sandpit: Flood and Riparian Plant Impacts from Fill Material The Greenmeyer Sandpit contains fill material that precludes natural flooding and regeneration of riparian plant communities. Management Option: Cultivate fill material to allow flooding cycles and other natural processes to flush the site gradually and reclaim the flood plain.

Infrastructure: Valley Oaks Impacts Infrastructure (such as facilities and parking) sit among the Valley oaks precluding seedling recruitment in its footprint.

Management Option: Retain facilities but create another seedling recruitment area in a different location.

Land Uses and Associated Developments Maintenance Administrative Complex:Roadside Parking The off-street and roadside parking areas located between the Merced River and Foresta Road were not designed or built to prevent water quality contamination from automotive fluids, surface water runoff or sediment transport.

Management Option: Relocate parking from the river's edge. Build new parking east of Foresta Road at the Administrative Facility (west of office/warehouse building or in front of waste water treatment plant).

SEGMENT 5, 6, 7 AND 8: Management Considerations and Potential Management Options

Visitor Use Management Program South Fork: Paddling and Floating Public comment has expressed interest in continuing to allow paddling and floating opportunities in this segment.

Management Options: Continue to allow paddling and floating in this segment with designated put-in and takeout for boating in

the section through Wawona proper and limits on the number of boats per year. Limits should be placed on commercial floating.

Opportunities to Direct Connection to River Values

Camp A.E. Wood Visitor use such as camping and administrative use such as facility maintenance causes ongoing threats and disturbances to archeological resources at Camp A.E. Wood.

Management Option: Stabilize archeological remains of Camp and conduct data recovery of other remains. Provide interpretive display highlighting the importance of Camp A.E. Wood as an example of African-American soldiers in park history as well as archeological stewardship.

Land Uses and Associate d Developments Picnic Area Near Wawona Store The existing picnic area at Wawona is overcrowded and demand exceeds capacity for visitor use and parking.

Management Option: Redesign picnic area in its current location; designate river access.

Impoundement: Effects on Free-Flowing Condition Surface water withdrawals and impoundment affect the free-flowing condition of the river; excessive water withdrawals will limit aquatic life.

Management Options: Investigate reasonable options, such as water system development from Biledo Spring or Big Creek. Retain the impoundment remains until other options are developed.

Ecological and Natural Resource Values Wawona Campground The proximity of camp sites causes trampling and riverbank erosion that inhibits riparian vegetation growth, affecting water quality. 29 of the 99 campsites at Wawona are located within 150 feet of the river.

Management Options: Relocate or close camp sites that are too close to the river.

Sincerely,

Emily Schrepf Central Valley Program Manager National Parks Conservation Association 1401 Fulton St ste 916 Fresno, CA 93721 Cell 559.960.7056 eschrepf@npca.org

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Correspondence ID: 102 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - I would prefer removing lodging and replace with developing more camping to increase capacity. There needs to be more walk-in camping.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many other bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may

eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Unlike other climbers however that have made similar comments, I feel that increasing shuttle services is important to reduce the impact of carbon emissions in the Valley. I would like to see the addition of more capacity for bouldering equipment.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 103 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 104 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 21:17:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock

quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 105 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: * Please cut & paste the text below in the the second field * Alter or add as you like *

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As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 106 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a paying costumer and climber who frequents Yosemite Valley several times a year, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 107 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 21:32:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: (1-1a)(2-2d)(3-3c)4-4e)(5-5b)(6-6d)(7-7b)(8-8c)(9-9d)(10-10c)(11-11c)(12-12b)(13-13c)(14-14b)(15-15e)(16-16a)(17-17a)(18-18a)(19-19a)(20-20b)(21-21a)(22-22c)(23-23b)(24-24a)(25-25a)(26-26b)(27-27b)(28-28b)(29-29b)(30-30a)(31-31b)(32-32a)(33-33a)

Comments: (2-2d All livestock should wear manure catchers on all trails. Livestock trails should be relocated to lower impact areas such as upper parts of Echo Valley stretch of Merced LK trail. Require more monetary compensation from concessionaire and trail maintenance to all impacted trails from H.S.C use. Reduce stock rides to Nevada Falls or make stock only trails for day rides.)

6-6d Clear river for boating only from Stoneman to raft take out. All rafting in rivers should be taken serious as to threat of harm to self if undertaken on the river

9-9d Expand on Upper Pines campground,Camp4 and backpackers campgrounds with the addition of group campfire rings only.

11-11c Relocate campsites to lower impact to the river.

Correspondence ID: 108 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 21:51:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 109 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 22:04:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 110 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 22:10:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the

lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

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- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 111 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Friends of Indian Creek Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 22:21:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas,

including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

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- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 112 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 22:32:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may

eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 113 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 22:36:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 114 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 115 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock

quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 116 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 22:47:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 117 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 118 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use

parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 119 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

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- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at

the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 120 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our

recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 121 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the

Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 122 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 123 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

Camping options should not encroach upon the undeveloped areas of the west valley.

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use

reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 124 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 23:33:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: Here are my comments regarding the Issues addressed in the Merced River Plan Workbook:

- Issue 7: I prefer option C - the only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. I believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil?s Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

- Issue 9: I prefer option B - more primitive / rustic camping should be created.

- Issue 10: I prefer option C - replace existing bridges with foot bridges designed to enhance the free-flowing condition of the river.

- Issue 12: I prefer option B - restore visitor use opportunities at upper and lower river campgrounds.

- Issue 15: I prefer option A - the installation of a roundabout and under-crossing for pedestrians to relieve congestion.

- Issue 19: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity.

- Issue 20: I prefer option D - the installation of a pedestrian underpass to allow access to Lower Yosemite Falls. Relocating the lodge entrance or an overpass don?t seem practical and won?t work.

- Issue 22: I prefer option D - the Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed?s Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and many others bouldering areas. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts. Curbing to formalize parking areas may eliminate many parking areas for smaller climbing and bouldering areas that planners might not know about.

- Issue 23: I prefer option A - develop more camping to increase capacity

Comments: As a climber who boulders in Yosemite Valley frequently, here are some additional thoughts:

- The bouldering in Yosemite Valley is universally regarded as some of the best in world. The unique combination of rock quality, rock features, boulder sizes and quantity make the bouldering in Yosemite an Outstandingly Remarkable Value (ORV) that should be protected. Additionally, climbing has a long a significant history in Yosemite Valley.

- Bouldering requires a large amount of gear that makes using shuttle services impractical. Therefore maintaining and increasing the level of recreational parking is critical.

- The bouldering at Camp 4 is considered the birthplace of modern bouldering and has the largest quantity of all the bouldering areas in Yosemite Valley. The site of the former gas station was previously used by boulders for parking but has since been used as a staging area for the recent road improvement projects. I strongly recommend this area be reconfigured into a day use parking when the road improvements are completed.

- The recent reduction of parking in the Ahwahnee Hotel lot has adversely effected climbers as there is a large bouldering area at the base of the talus field and many climbing areas (Royal Arches, etc) are access from this point.

- A permitted parking system would adversely affect those who boulder because of the quantity of gear required for our recreation. There are no reasonable alternatives to transporting the gear in our cars and parking near the bouldering areas.

- The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments. Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

- More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot.

Correspondence ID: 125 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850 **Private:** Y
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,14,2011 23:52:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1: The following are the alternatives that I strongly prefer:

East Yosemite Valley Campsites: 7B

Housekeeping Camp: 11B

Upper & Lower River Campgrounds: 12B

Yosemite Valley: Paddling & Floating: 18B

Valley Camping Demand: 19B

Cathedral Beach Picnic Area: 24A

Sentinel Beach Picnic Area: 25A

Comments: The protecting the Merced River and its surrounding ecosystem isn't an easy task. But please don't be tempted to implement the easiest solution: to limit the public access to the river and reduce nearby structures, especially on the recreational portion of the river that runs through Yosemite Valley, in an effort to make it more "natural".

Don't forget that Yosemite Valley was set aside in 1864 to be a place where all American could enjoy outdoor recreational opportunities amid its world-class scenic beauty. Also the Park Service needs to understand as the population of the U.S. grows, visitation to Yosemite will to continue increase and more infrastructure is and will be desperately needed inside Yosemite Valley to meet this increase demand.

But this increased infrastructure, including more campsites and overnight lodging accommodations and day-use parking lots must be built in a way that the wild & scenic nature of the Merced River is not adversely impacted.

This is not an easy task, but I believe with the proper thoughtful planning it is possible to increase and modernize the man-made infrastructure inside Yosemite Valley to meet the demands of increased visitation while at the same time improving the quality of the Merced River and its environs. Both can be accomplished. Both need to be accomplished.

Correspondence ID: 126 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Mariposans for the Environment and Responsible Government Non-Governmental
Received: Dec,09,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: MARIPOSANS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT BOX 2121, MARIPOSA, CA 95338

December 9, 2011

Don Neubacher, Superintendent Yosemite National Park U. S. National Park Service P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

RE: Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook Exercise

Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

MERG has actively and in good faith participated in the Merced River Plan meetings and workshops since 2009, including the recent 2011 Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook process. Further, as a group, the MERG Board has worked its way through the Workbook itself. As we feel the Workbook is not the ideal method to submit our input, we are attaching a list of our recommendations to this email. We do hope you will find them useful and we expect that they will be incorporated into the Merced River Plan alternatives analysis.

We are aware that FOYV and the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club have submitted input to you as they have advised us of same. We support the thrust of their comments. We, too, are vitally concerned about user capacity, transportation planning and parking. With reference to your earlier question to me regarding expansion of parking at Taft Toe, we do not think more parking is the answer to anything. Rather, management practices and decisions related to parking should be based on user capacity planning and better and more efficient management of existing resources. Please note the following paragraphs supplemented by the attached vision and specific responses to the Workbook's structure.

While we believe that you and your staff understand and intend to comply with the schedule contained in the Settlement Agreement (SA), we also believe, given the cursory attention paid to user capacity in the Workbook, that we need to emphasize its importance as a foundational element in the MRP development process. In addition, it is important for all of us to remember that the SA does not stand alone. In fact the SA, in its requirement to develop user capacity, points to the Court decision filed March 27, 2008, and contained at http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/upload/0715124.pdf. (See Page 7 of 22 of the Settlement Agreement.)

Yosemite Valley and the Merced River within the Park have been over-used and suffered serious adverse impacts as a result. Court decisions have established requirements for user capacity planning and noted the extent and nature of over development (see for example footnote 5 beginning on page 3081 of the of the Ninth Circuit Court's ruling). I will quote from another part of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision (at p. 3068): "The Secretarial Guidelines also envision the use of varying strategies and implementations, depending on the segment's classification and ownership. Id. at 39,459. Notably, the Secretarial Guidelines discuss "carrying capacity," a term that does not appear in the WSRA itself and is defined as "[t]he quantity of recreation use which an area can sustain without adverse impact on the [ORVs] and free flowing character of the river area, the quality of recreation experience, and public health and safety." Id. at 39,455. "The Secretarial Guidelines contemplate that [s]tudies will be made during preparation of the management plan and periodically thereafter to determine the quantity and mixture of recreation and other public use which can be permitted without adverse impact on the resource values of the river area. Management of the river area can then be planned accordingly. Id. at 39,459. (Emphasis added.) "The Secretarial Guidelines also require that a component's management plan state the kinds and amounts of public use which the river area can sustain without impact to the values for which it was designated[,] and specific management measures which will be used to implement the management objectives for each of the various river segments and protect esthetic, scenic, historic, archeologic and scientific features." (Emphasis added.) Further, on p. 3070 the Court states: "Analyzing the plain meaning of the terms within the phrase "address . . . user capacities" as well the Secretarial Guidelines, we interpreted the requirement to "address . . . user capacities" to mean that the CMP must include "specific measurable limits on use." Id. at 797 (emphasis added). "[T]he plain meaning of the phrase 'address . . . user capacities,' is simply that the CMP must deal with or discuss the maximum number of people that can be received at a WSRS." Id. at 796. However, the plain meaning does not mandate "one particular approach to visitor capacity." Id." (Emphasis added.) I am not aware of any of your staff's work so far that specifically addresses user capacity, which is required by the Court rulings and the SA. The Workbook cites "management actions". I submit that management actions spring from a pre-determined user capacity analysis. Management actions cannot determine user capacity. To put it very simply, the Valley presently has too much of everything. The attachment to this letter details our specific ideas as related to the Workbook. In meeting informally with your staff on numerous occasions this year, I am concerned that they may be lacking a strategic vision of what the Merced River Plan (MRP) should be. They have a very difficult challenge to work through all of this, and I hope that they are not becoming mired in endless paperwork and losing sight of the direction in which we should be going. Several on your staff have expressed concern about a lack of resources to implement the MRP should they make choices that require significant investment. Resources should not be a concern at this point; the best possible MRP is. Resources can be addressed later. That is not to say resources will be abundant; we know they will not be. Nevertheless, they should not constrain visioning and planning at the present time.

In addition to MERG's interest in assuring that user capacity planning precede management practice decisions, we have other observations about the Park's stated interest in diversifying visitation to the Park. Many of our members have expressed concerns about the cost of visiting the Park, which is not family-friendly for the average American family. The present concessionaire operates on a profit-oriented business model. While we think for profit business are generally good, Yosemite Valley is a special place that must be protected according to your own MRP Overall Goal Statement:

"Protect and enhance the values for which the river was designated wild and scenic, leaving the river unimpaired for future generations."

We recommend that only minimal services be provided in the Valley and that a not for profit concessionaire should be seriously considered. The business model should be based on sustainability which is in the best interests of the natural resources of the Valley and Park, rather than growth and profit which is not in the best interest of the Park's resources, visitors, or tax payers.

We note that much space is taken up in the Valley by the concessionaire for offices, employee housing, employee parking, maintenance facilities, etc. Offices can be located outside the Park as can employee housing. We understand there are some 1200 employees who may represent more than 1000 cars. This is taking up a lot of vehicle space that could be used by visitors.

In closing, we insist that the new MRP meet all the requirements of the March 27, 2008 Court filing and the September 2010 Settlement Agreement, both of which state unequivocally that the cornerstone of this planning process, in addition to ORVs, is a user capacity analysis. It is our expectation that the spirit as well as the specific requirements contained in the Court ruling and the Settlement Agreement will guide staff actions. We are very concerned as this level of commitment is not apparent to us at the present time. We welcome and value your cooperation and graciousness, and that of your staff, in this most important matter and look forward to further collaboration on finalization of the required user capacity plan. I therefore wish to accept your kind offer to meet with me in early January. Please ensure that at least one of the three user capacity experts named in

the SA attend that meeting and be prepared to describe and discuss the intended approach to user capacity development.

Sincerely,

John P. Brady, Chair Attachment Attachment

MERG Response to YNP Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook

Vision -- Less is more ? User Capacity Plan that Protects ORVs ? Lower cost for Visitors ? Better experiences for Visitors ? More emphasis on enhancement of the natural environment ? A sustainability business model for the concessionaire

River Management Challenges: Our Ideas

Ecological and Natural Resource Values ? Preserve and restore natural conditions and processes while providing the highest quality visitor experience ? User capacity is a critical element in achieving this goal/objective ? MERG recognizes this may result in changes in the levels of user facilities and services Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values ? Focus on the river, specifically on protecting sensitive areas and species ? Direct visitor use of the river to the most ecologically resilient access points ? Take actions necessary to limit visitor access in order to protect and preserve significant cultural resources Visitor Use Management Program Maximize use of an integrated user management approach that includes: ? User limitations ? Reservation strategies that use regional and gateway community resources/capacities ? Optimizing visitor options for transportation and parking combined with financial or other incentives to minimize private vehicle use in the valley ? Providing low cost, flexible transportation options to move visitors from outside the valley floor to valley venues ? Expanding valley shuttle services and low cost tour options within the valley to serve all valley destinations and Tunnel View

Land Uses and Associated Developments ? Reduce visitor use facilities and services on the valley floor ? Relocate concessionaire and NPS employees' housing out of the valley except public safety and essential maintenance personnel ? Provide mandatory mass transit services for concessionaire employees ? Reduce the overnight visitor/user capacity in Yosemite Valley, including campsites and lodging facilities ? Move all administration out of the valley ? Remove camping and infrastructure from all riparian areas and flood plains, recognizing this will reduce camping in the valley and require expansion of camping facilities outside the valley ? Reduce retail services in the valley

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Correspondence ID: 127 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,12,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Delete, duplicate entry

Correspondence ID: 128 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition Recreational Groups
Received: Dec,13,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Comments to 2011 Merced River Plan Workbook 12-13-11 YOSEMITE VALLEY CAMPERS COALITION Brian H. Ouzounian, Co-Founder

The following comments are in response to the questions and multiple choice "options" provided in the 2011 Wild and Scenic River Merced River Planning Workbook. As a general statement, our organization is disappointed that there is no option to "Repair the flood damaged campgrounds to their original condition, including and especially the Group Campground." This request has been repetitively submitted time-and-time-again over the years during various workshops and open comment periods, assured all the while that those comments would be brought forward to the next current planning project.

Attached to these comments is a cost comparison prepared at the request of past U.S. Congressman George Radanovich to illustrate the feasibility of retaining those campgrounds/sites in the Valley. The numbers are compelling for repairing the flood damaged campgrounds to their pre-flood conditions. Something that the Workbook ignores is the cost feasibility of the ideas presented. This study illuminates one aspect.

Segment 1 Wilderness Trails: High Encounter Rates 1A. NO, 1B. NO 1C. Item lacks information in order to make informed comments. Overnight parking for these visitors cannot be addressed since the plan lacks a transportation plan and a study of user capacity. Need to define "high concentration rates" as there is no basis as to this standard of care for this statement. Again, lack of information

Recreational User Conflicts 2A. NO, 2B. NO. 2C.NO Helicopters are used in ample frequency for search & rescue. Astonished that this is an option but if there is some greater reason for this option, it needs to be explained in more depth. Item lacks information in order to make informed comments. User capacity study needed. 2D. Stock is vital for trail and wilderness campground maintenance and also for rescue. The interference with recreational visitors is minimal in the big picture of things. Also stock use is a historical component of our Park and has historical value, which should be part of the interpretive educational core. Trail maintenance for solid waste matter (feces) should be implemented, if not already in place, to protect the resources. Item lacks information in order to make informed comments.

Merced Lake Backpackers' Campground: Use Levels 3A. NO, 3B. NO, 3C. YES but?.3D. This destination is a historical recreational site. Item lacks information in order to make informed comments. User capacity study needed prior to comments.

Merced Lake High Sierra Camp: Wilderness and ORV Impacts 4A-G NO. This destination is a historical recreational site. Item lacks information in order to make informed comments. A user capacity study needed prior to comments.

Little Yosemite Valley Backpackers' Campground Crowding 5A-D. This destination is a historical recreational site. Item lacks information in order to make informed comments. A reasonable approach is minimization, not elimination. Day parking for these visitors cannot be addressed since the plan lacks a transportation plan.

Clarks Bridge to El Cap Bridge: Large Woody Debris Management 6A, B., and C. unclear. 6D. Prefer to state the following: Allow/engineer/place logs to assist in mitigating riverbank erosion. Do not allow perpendicular to water flow. Fashion log placement to also facilitate recreational self-owned rafts and vessels and the safe use of such in seasonal months. Objective is not to create a totally safe river rafting condition but rather a safer more visitor friendly experience, such as the removal of cross-current logs in this stretch of river. For instance the condition where the Merced River intersects with Tenaya Creek and the one cross-current log consistently causes injury to visitors and self-owned rafts at the west end of North Pines Campground. Eliminate the concession rafting enterprise altogether. River floating on the Merced River in this section of the river is a historical ORV for it has scenic value of the geology as well as recreational value, both ORV. It is an overwhelming experience when done in solitude on personal water vessels versus mass concession provided rafts with multiple visitors aboard.

Riparian Zone: Campsites 7A. No, 7B. No, 7C. Include the appropriate comments in 6D. and: Repair any flood damage campsites as Congress appropriated the funds post flood. Use engineering methods of erosion control for riverbank protection, which vary in form but are effectively implemented to facilitate both visitor recreational use and riverbank protection. The river access to campers is an ORV! Camping as near as possible to the river is an ORV and the most desirable form of visitation for centuries. Whether it is sitting alone on a log reading, bird watching, meditating, napping, photographing, or river rafting, this is a prime Yosemite Valley ORV and needs protection and repair after the flood. The river will do what it wants to do each season and camping is the most compatible resource based activity with minimal impact and with the ability to adjust to the spring run-offs. The riparian management is subject to the natural flow. For the NPS to try to manage it to some philosophical level is unnatural. Each seasonal event either allows the riparian growth to remain or it scours it away by erosion. It is unfair to blame the campers for this natural event each season. The unnatural placement of the current split-rail fences is a prime example as installed along the banks of Lower Pines and North Pines Campgrounds. The NPS has bored holes into the fragile river banks, disturbing the root structure of the trees while trying to convince the public that it is saving riparian growth; an oxymoron to say the least. Did anyone have a conscience when the gas-powered post-hole auger bored into the banks cutting tree roots and riparian growth? One wonders. These fences need to be removed and allow the river to do what it does naturally. These fences also concentrate river bank ingress and egress by visitors at the ends of the fences, overloading those areas that would have not otherwise had the impact. There is minimal visitor impact on these riverbanks to warrant such extreme measures as in this option.

Of the 81 miles of this river, certainly the portion from Clark's Bridge to Sentinel Beach can be zoned for recreation as described above; a reasonable approach.

Since there is a lack of a user capacity study, further comments cannot be provided to a greater extent.

Cultural ORV: Visitor Use and Infrastructure 8A. No, 8B. No, 8C., Yes, 8D. Camping by the Merced River is a Cultural ORV, although Park planners have not included these past comments in this workbook. Reference the thousands of comments on the petition by the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition (www.yosemitevalleycampers.org). Repair these campgrounds to repair the omission of this Cultural ORV. Protection measures are encouraged to allow and facilitate this ongoing Cultural ORV. Science must not trump this ORV. Its preservation and repair are consistent with that of the commissioning of the Park in 1860 by President Abraham Lincoln via Frederick Law Olmstead, which I know the NPS has on hand. However, since there is a lack of user capacity study, further comments on this option are limited.

Valley: Camping Demand 9A. YES but not walk-in, rather drive-in and auto based 9B. YES in addition to 9A 9C. NO, NO, NO 9D. Please include the thousands of comments on the e-petition submitted by the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition (www.yosemitevalleycampers.org) and the substance of the petition itself by repairing the flood damaged campgrounds and sites including Lower Pines, Upper River, Lower River, and especially Group Campground to pre-flood conditions. Congress appropriated the funds for such repair and it needs to happen accordingly. Expand North Pines Campground into the Stables area, eliminating it as a concession but retain its services near the other existing stables north of the administration area for trail and wilderness areas maintenance as well as rescue services. Make new camping east of the Ahwahnee Hotel parking area and keep Sugar Pine Bridge! Expand, where possible, campsites in the flood damaged campgrounds. The demand for more family affordable auto based drive-in campsites is overwhelmingly upon us and it has been for decades. Campers experience and become stewards of self-reliance in the most rustic forms for the most part. If the YNPS had more responsibly reached out to the campers for public comment there would have been a huge response. Much of the would be respondents are so fed up with YNPS disregarding their requests after attending the multiple open houses and planning sessions over the years that they regard their participation as pointless. In the past, there has been great participation, only to be reduced consistent with Park officials turning their backs on their requests. Those who have not been contacted are in the millions; they are those who have camped over the decades and those who were not successful in obtaining a campsite reservation. Many are day visitors who wanted to camp but must resort to day visits; they are the ones most likely to know where to park their cars by the way. The first time visitor finds themselves in a myriad of confusion related to parking. Without a transportation and parking element in this study, further comments are postponed.

Sugar Pine Bridge/Ahwahnee Bridge Road Berm: Free-Flowing Condition 10A. No, 10B. No, 10C. No 10D. These bridges are "Historical Structures" and belong on the Federal Registry for historical protection. They will also serve the access to those areas once the campgrounds are restored to pre-flood conditions. They will also serve as escape routes if and when there is

disaster that demands evacuation; cut off these bridges and you cut off a major evacuation route. These bridges also would serve a campground east of the Ahwahnee Hotel recommended in the comments of Section 9. Implement compatible engineering methods to accomplish free-flowing conditions as a best-possible compromise solution. This discussion and ideas are similar to those points made in sections 6 and 7, and may include but not be limited to rip rap, natural fallen log configuration, gabions, and/or any combination, and native rock/masonry diversion walls. Although this is not to suggest replacement of the bridges, an illustration is the past reconstruction of Sentinel Bridge that was rebuilt of similar style and materials to accommodate flooding and transportation. These bridges are also needed to accommodate bike and pedestrian visitor use as currently used. This Workbook and public study is absent transportation and parking plan, a major component needed to comment further.

Housekeeping Camp: Riparian and Flood Plain Impacts 11A. NO, 11B. YES to keeping all units but NO the plan to delineate river access scenario as it concentrates damage and accelerates erosion, 11C. NO, 11D, NO, 11E. This facility should be allowed to be updated/improved but to its rustic fashion within its existing footprint. It is a historical family friendly low cost facility to visitors that include basic and rustic amenities for a visitor equation of well graded choices of resource based options. It is slightly less rustic than camping and less "high brow" than the Camp Curry cabins. To many, it too is a Cultural ORV. The idea of controlling river access is incorrect. The split rail fences need to be removed as they concentrate ingress and egress at the ends of the fences and do not allow river access to be dispersed. They are un-natural blight and disrupt the root structure where installed. Add bioengineered stabilization to the existing rip rap where possible.

Upper and Lower River Campground Areas: 1997 Flood Impacts 12A. NO 12B. Yes to repairing pre-flood quantities of campsites but not to the other points. 12C. NO 12D. By infrastructure, I take it to mean restrooms and not campsites. If so, I agree. The sewer and water supply in place must not be removed. Repair riverside campsites as discussed above in 8D. Campsites must be repaired to pre-flood quantities and locations and expanded where possible and should include/expand areas to the north of each. Riverbank erosion and reconstruction should be implemented per ideas using proven engineering methods as discussed above in 6D and 7C,

Cultural ORV: Visitor Use Impacts 13A. NO, 13B.NO, 13C.NO 13D. In the past, agreeing to these measures, A or B or C, without specific locations & remedies are open ended licenses to implement devices that a czar may implement at his/her discretion. These methods proposed are theoretical in this category. They would have a negative impact on existing and future camping.

Valley Camping Demand 14A. YES but "Rivers" Campground (plural) 14B. YES but inside the Valley to the maximum extent possible and per comments on 9D. 14C. NO 14D. The options are not per the camping stakeholders' request and this option as written is regarded as disingenuous to the requests of the past. Campers have requested this to read (14A.) Repair and return all flood damaged campgrounds and sites, including and especially group camping, to pre-flood condition. Not just the Rivers Campgrounds! An abundance of documented comments to this end have been submitted on this to warrant a correct inclusion in this workbook. These areas are now "damaged campgrounds" and are awaiting "repair." The funds for such were appropriated by Congress for this end after the flood damage.

Camp 6 Intersection: Congestion 15A., B., C., D., E., Not enough information to comment; congestion caused by NPS eliminating and curbing other dispersed parking areas. Transportation plan is not included in the workbook as it would directly relate to this condition. Should have been part of the workbook.

Leidig Meadow: Informal Trail Impacts 16A. NO, 16B. NO, 16C., Install protection devices and boardwalks that have been proven effective. Wooden observation platforms are consistent with accommodating both. Provide picnic tables or observation benches to establish designated areas to view and experience the ORV's.

Swinging Bridge: Riparian Impacts 17A. A transportation plan is needed to properly assess this option. Not enough information provided. 17B. NO, 17C. NO, 17D. NO, 17E. See 17A

Yosemite Valley: Paddling and Floating 18A. NO, 18B. NO, 18C. NO, 18D. NO 18E. Prohibit all commercial floating by concessionaire or otherwise. Allow private floatation and vessels only. Do not require permits. Allow floating from Clark's Bridge to Sentinel Beach. Provide existing hybrid shuttle service from Sentinel Bridge to the East Valley campgrounds. Remove the small amount of dangerous wood debris to facilitate safer floating. Remove posted closures, presently from Clarks Bridge to Stoneman Bridge. Remove split-rail fencing along banks of North and Lower Pines Campgrounds, which only concentrate foot traffic and damage riparian life. Commercial rafting causes more damage and denigration to the river banks, along the river, at the put-in locations and at the pick?up site, presently at Sentinel Beach, than does the spread out low impact of individual private rafters. Remove the swimming pool type floaters and ropes along the river for the concessionaire, which are NOT consistent with the natural visitor experience, rather un-natural. Massive degradation at Sentinel Beach picnic area has occurred from the rafts, the concentration of people, and the yellow school busses to this once pristine area.

Valley Camping Demand 19A. NO, 19B. NO, 19C, NO 19D. See the comments on the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition e-petition at www.yosemitevalleycampers.org Develop new campgrounds as follows: West of El Capitan Meadow Eagle Creek Area Yellow Pine Area Relocate Stables: eliminate stable concessions; expand North Pines in place of Stables east through the present apple orchard. In some areas at the stables, provide parking and picnic areas west of Clark's Bridge but not removing campsites. At Upper Pines, provide parking and picnic areas at the west end. Add auto-based drive-in campsites to the east to the maximum extent. Add campground east of the Ahwahnee Hotel Parking lot and west of Sugar Pine Bridge to the maximum extent possible. Repair all campgrounds and sites, including Group Campground along Tenaya Creek, both Rivers Campgrounds and Lower Pines to pre-flood conditions and locations. At all campgrounds, install and maintain vending for ice and dry firewood to reduce auto trips to the Village Market. Develop a paved bicycle circulation plan and pathways to facilitate

and encourage bike travel to all destinations including the Village Market and as far west as Bridlevail Falls.

Yosemite Lodge: Intersection Congestion 20A. YES, 20B. NO, 20C. NO, 20D. An underground tunnel can be made, including handicapped accessibility, most easily. This is the best option.

El Cap Meadow: Informal Social Trails 21A. YES, 21B. NO, 21C. NO, 21D.NO, 21E. Maximize the use of elevated platforms but add wood decks with observation benches for public viewing. Use the same type of platforms for picnic tables.

West Pohono Bridge: River Access 22A. NO, 22B. NO, 22C. NO, 22D. Maximize parking and designate river access via curbing and boulder placement where appropriate. Valley: Camping Demand 23.A No to Taft Toe. Make parking and picnic area on wood platforms with picnic tables and observation benches. Expand El Cap picnic area and parking as above. Add Camping at Eagle Creek and Yellow Pines to maximum extent possible. Near Camp 4, west of the Lodge, expand picnic areas and parking as stated in #4 above. Do not make a campground. 23B. Yes in addition to previous campground requests ONLY. Not in substitution of. 23C. NO 23D. See above

Cathedral Beach Picnic Area: High Visitor Use 24A. NO, 24B. NO, 24C. Redesign picnic area to increase visitor use with more picnic tables and observation benches. Designate formal access point using wood platforms without fencing off areas. Platforms will suffice. Insufficient information to comment further. Need user capacity study info.

Sentinel Beach Picnic Area: Visitor Experience 25.A-25C. NO 25E. Redesign picnic area to expand picnicking. Remove all commercial concession rafting and allow personal / private rafting egress, formalize vehicle access. Incorporate existing Valley Hybrid buses to include a stop here for purposes of day use and for picking up personal rafters who wish to raft to this destination. Add viewing wood platforms and benches near riverside.

Greenmeyer Sandpit: Flood and Riparian Plan Impacts from Fill Material 26A-26D. No comments as insufficient information

Infrastructure: Valley Oaks Impacts 27A-27D. No comments as insufficient information

Maintenance Administrative Complex: Roadside Parking 28A-D. No comments as insufficient information

Wawona Campground: Campground Activity Near River 29A. NO. The campsites are not too close to the river 29B. NO 29C. Expand campground with more sites. Add more near-river sites where possible. Plant more trees of various local species as campground lacks shade. Do not designate river access so as to spread impact and not concentrate it.

Camp A.E. Wood 30A-B. No comments

South Fork: Paddling and Floating 31A. NO 31B. Yes. Remove fallen timber hazards

Picnic Area Near Wawona Store 32A. Yes but insufficient information to comment further 32B. No 32C. Do not designate river access so as to spread impact and not concentrate it. Impoundement: Effects on Free-Flowing Condition 33.A-B. No comments as insufficient information

Questions From Page 27: -How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrological function? See the above answers

-How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? See the above answers

-Which areas are high priority for ecological restoration? The land where the concessions operate.

-How can we preserve our limited water supply? The YNPS and concessionaire employees and families contribute to massive waste water usage. Also, the "fixed-roof lodging" facilities do the same. Laundry requirements necessitate massive amounts of water also plus lavatory, water closets, showers, etc. The special events that fill the fixed roof lodging surcharge the impact on the water supply. Reduce this impact and you preserve 'our limited water supply'. Campers require minimal water use and make due as minimalists making them the best user and preserver of resources. -What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality? Increase camping, reduce fixed roof lodging and support amenities. -What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources? -How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? Eliminate rafting and allow private floatation vessels from Clarks Bridge to Sentinel Beach. Less impact and most likely less river use. Remove bicycle concessions and develop a transportation plan that includes and encourages privately owned bicycles and paved pathways from the east to the west ends of the Valley and all destinations in the Valley. Campers bring their bikes as a matter of routine and can even grocery shop on a bike if there is such a plan. Enforce the current maximum allowable campers to six (6) per site so as to enhance the quality of the visitor experience. Would you want to camp next to 20 and expect to listen to the flow of the river, the birds, and the natural sounds around your campsite? The more there are in a site, the more distractions (stereos). Enforce the quiet time rules as well. Limit animals should be boarded such as now present at the stables, not mixed

with campers

- If the NPS were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? Where is the YNPS transportation and parking plan? This has been a necessity for planning purposes and is not included in the workbook. It is needed to assist in forming opinions prior to these workbook sessions. Has anyone surveyed the visitors to ask their opinions on parking and transportation? -Would you support bus services along new routes into the Park? Absolutely not. Busses have unregulated diesel emissions. The roads are not engineered for busses but rather autos. Also, auto emissions are regulated and bus emissions are not. CNG busses would be great but they need refilling and one can most probably not be built and maintained in the Valley. The mechanism of CNG busses must go in the under carriage, which is where the heavy baggage is normally loaded on busses for weight distribution. If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? No and why are you asking this without a transportation study? Have you surveyed the visitors on this matter? Have you asked those who ride the tour busses if they would prefer auto transportation? They serve the foreign visitor who "pay-to-play and not US Residents. They cost too much and the amenities that serve the riders are cost prohibitive forcing eating at concessions and the need for fixed roof lodging. Campers cannot use buses to load their gear and get around. What about emergencies? Being confined to a bus is not enjoyment of the Park's resources. Ask a young family with two children if they would rather ride a tour bus into the Park or take the family minivan? The answer is the minivan. Have you asked them by going throughout the Park with a survey?

-Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? No No No. Why or why not? Who wants to enjoy the Park on a bus? Maybe foreign visitors who don't know better and are booked by a travel agent. Maybe they are OK with taking pictures from a moving bus because there are few, if any, turnouts to stop and take pictures, save Inspiration Point (Tunnel View) Is this a market that the YNPS is targeting, foreign visitors whereby increasing the profits of the concessionaire of which the Park gets a 15% cut? This begs the question as to what is the cost of such a system and who pays for it? Not the US Resident, probably or will we via our tax dollars to the YNPS to subsidize this idea. Again, is anyone looking at cost feasibility? This transportation mode would reduce the visitors into the park as most would not use them; who wants to abandoned their cars, unsupervised, and travel a much longer distance into the park, including getting road sickness??and with children? No way. Also, consider the danger and imagine trying to pass the busses if in an auto on those winding roads that are too narrow for busses! There will be more accidents, which would be a long way from emergency services. Would not support tearing up land in the gateway communities for massive parking lots and/or structures. This would increase emissions into the parkland and surrounding communities; remember we campers had to reduce campfire hours to reduce particulate airborne matter? Bussing is contrary to that end or can we lift the restraints on the campfire now to enhance the visitor experience? Wasn't this studied and stopped years ago? Why is it popping up again?

-If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? No but not enough information is provided. This seems to be a loaded question as well as the following related questions. Isn't a transportation and parking study appropriate first? Don't we need a user capacity study first, which was brought up at the Workshop meeting in the Park? -Would you support the use of a day use parking/vehicle permit? No Does this mean 1) Would you use a day use parking vehicle permit? No OR 2)Would you support a day use parking/vehicle permit system? No

-What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? Camping, picnicking, bicycling on private bikes, river floating on private vessels, hiking, walking, photography, hammock napping, bird watching, backpacking, fishing, private horseback riding, rock climbing, snow shoeing, Nordic skiing, wildlife enjoyment, log sitting along the Merced River while reading a book or napping on the log, sunbathing on that log. These activities are done best via privately owned automobiles which are quiet, emission regulated, and offer the freedoms of travel, gear access and the ability to evacuate in case of a personal or Park emergency.

What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? More affordable auto based drive-in camping and picnicking areas, such as repairing the flood damaged campgrounds, including and especially Group Campground. The current pay-to-play accommodations do not serve the original intent of the Park that President Lincoln envisioned.

-How can the NPS support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? Repair the flood damage campgrounds to pre-flood conditions including Group Campground as funds were appropriated by congress for their repair after the 1997 flood. -How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? Camping is a resource based ORV. Continue to educate campers proactively coaching them on river protection instead of siting them with violations. Install campground showers (cold) to control body oils and soapy waste water. Limit the maximum occupancy in campsites to the present maximum of six (6) and repair Group Campground, which was damaged by the floods. This would require a permit and conditions of use that would be requirements of the permit. Do not install walk-in campsites but rather auto based drive-in sites. Campers bring their own gear, food, firewood, and leave seasonally, which gives the resources time to rest. It is not a year round event. Campers require little and enjoy much.

Remove the riverside split-rail fences along Lower Pines and North Pines Campgrounds. These cause overloading of river banks at the ends of the fencing. Also, I wonder how the YNPS felt as the gas powered auger bored holes in the riverside tree root structure to install all those fence posts? Did you turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to the damage that was caused? It is an oxymoron to install these fences and call out for resource protection.

Why is there a "Concept Map" now issued with this exercise? It sends a message of predetermination. A marked up plan will be sent to accompany this report via U.S. Mail.

-What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity

in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor? The presence and proliferation of fixed-roof lodging is not consistent with resource protection. Camping is an activity that has minimal resource impact. It allows best exchange of visitor enjoyment with the minimum amount of support and infrastructure.

What is the housing population of both YNPS and concessionaire employees combined with their families? These two groups make up quite a lot of impact on the issues. Their basic overhead support is a huge day-to-day overload on the resources and probably growing verses diminishing. What minimal level of support is needed to preserve the resources and provide for the basic services they now offer? Fixed roof lodging requires massive vehicle trips and support services and create an unnecessary load on the resources whereas camping has minimal impact and requires very little oversight and support by comparison. Hotels require maintenance workers of various trades on a routine basis that is not required for camping. It is believed that there is a ratio of resource impact that is 10:1 of fixed roof lodging per night compared to the impact of camping per night, all services included!

Install ice and vending machines in campgrounds so as to limit vehicle trips to the market. Normally other staples can be done on a bike with a basket or a backpack.

Tour busses are not an amenity that is conducive to resource protection nor enjoyment. Their emissions are unregulated and the riders require massive concession support amenities such as fixed roof lodging, restaurants, internet, laundry service, "green dragon" tours about the Valley, stables, rafting concessions, swimming pools, etc.

-How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley? This makes no sense; define "efficiency." Lacks basis for an answer.

-How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met? It is obvious that the public cries out for more camping, which has a minimal operational need and a maximum visitor satisfaction and the most resource protection, hands down. They do not cry for more tour buses and more fixed roof lodging.

It is feared that from this difficult exercise the Park Planners will develop alternatives that will not be altered. The planners had an opportunity to do it right but it appears not the case. Unfortunately, campers remain un-notified and disenfranchised in the planning process, even after we have offered several methods of contact along the way here. The responses have been courteous but the follow-through inadequate.

[FROM YOSEMITE VALLEY CONCEPTS MAP COMMENTS] New campground west of El Cap Meadow Taft Toe: Make parking and picnic area to max Expand El Cap picnic area New Eagle Creek Campground New Yellow Pine Campground Make shuttle to pick up private rafters remove concession [Yellow Pine and Sentinel Bach] Add parking and picnicing east of Camp 4 9not camping0 Remove raft concession Repair flood damaged river (2ea) Campgrounds to pre-flood conditions and expand where possible New auto-based drive-in campground [east of ahwahnee] [Ahwahnee Bridge] to remain [Backpackers Camp] Repair Group Campground Do not remove Bridge Expand North Pines Eliminate Stable Concession [Expand Upper Pines Campground adding RV sites and] auto-based [campsites]

Correspondence ID: 129 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,13,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Segment 1: The Merced River wilderness corridor above Nevada Falls is one of the busiest wilderness use corridors in the park due to large numbers of hikers on their way to Half Dome or Merced Lake High Sierra Camp. Regulating use levels should be based on both visitor experience and impacts on the river ORVs. As a destination for many first time backcountry campers the campground at Little Yosemite Valley serves as a good alternative to dispersed camping. The clearly defined campsites equipped with bear lockers as well as available toilet facilities and treated water camping easier for many novice campers and help minimize impact to the river. Merced Lake High Sierra Camp as the largest in the High Sierra Camp system has more impact than the other camps. Additional impact is due to both the presence of many hikers and the grazing of pack animals in the surrounding area. The large backpacker's camp adjacent to the HSC increases the "front country" feel of the area. Both the backpacker's camp and High Sierra Camp should be removed to allow restoration of this spectacular park of the giant stairway backcountry. If neither the HSC nor campground were removed, reducing visitor capacity would be a next best step. I do not approve of helicopter use for supplying High Sierra Camps. There is at present excessive sound pollution from aircraft passing over the park and from use of helicopters in search and rescue operations.

Segment 2: Item 6- Large Woody Debris Management- I strongly urge the practice of moving woody debris be halted. At the same time, the number of tree falling into the river can be minimized by selectively logging conifers that have sprung up black oak groves as a result of past fire suppression. Throughout the Merced River Corridor there should be a serious effort to restore oak woodlands and meadows by decreasing the density of conifers. This will also restore more water to the Merced River aquifer as well as improve essential habitat for wildlife. Item 7- Placement of campgrounds, roads, lodging, offices, and other structures was done during an era when of flood and rock fall zones were not a consideration. With current knowledge of these zones and the dangers associated with them, development needs to be removed, where possible, in these areas of the wild and scenic river corridor. Item 9- Valley Camping Demand There are fewer campsites than there were in the 1930s, 1960s, and early 1990s as a result of impact to the Valley and flooding. If anything, campsites should be reduced to minimize impacts in riparian areas. Visitors need to be better educated about peak season crowding in the Valley be allowed to reserve campsite far in

advance.

Item 10-Sugar Pine Bridge/Ahwahnee Bridge/Road Berm- The restore river flow these bridges (as much as I love them) need to be removed along with the road berm and riverbank riprap in this corridor. Item 11- Housekeeping Camp- Remove all lodging units. Item 12- Upper and Lower River Campgrounds- Use of this area as a construction-staging zone is not helping restoration. Restore these sites. Possibly build a non-asphalt hiking trail between Yosemite Village and Curry Village to link these areas and keep walkers and bikers separated. Item 14- Campgrounds- Yosemite Valley and the Merced River Corridor do not have room for campgrounds unless other development is removed. For example- the Ahwahnee grounds, including old putting green and tennis courts, were the location of the first campground in the park. Item 15 Camp 6 day Intersection: Congestion- The Camp 6 park service housing area was closed in the mid-1980s after a series of dangerous tree fall event. By the 1980s many of the ponderosa pines and incense cedars were infected with the root disease, Heterobasion annosum. This endemic "root rot" had infected a large number of conifers growing together in dense groves as a result of fire suppression. During winter storms and Mono winds, large numbers of trees fell. One such event occurred in December 1982 and plans were implemented to move National Park Service employee housing from Camp 6. Less than two years later there was a major tree fall in January 1984 and again in December of that year. During one of these events a Park employee was killed by a tree that crushed the employee's cabin. All NPS housing in Camp 6 was removed by the late 1980s. The flood of 1997 damaged all the remaining concession housing there and following removal of debris, Camp 6 became a staging area for construction projects in Yosemite Valley. A result, more fill was added to this once riparian area. Later the overflow parking lot at Camp 6 was developed without any public planning process. It is not only an eyesore, but also a cause of major traffic congestion. One of my favorite bends of the Merced River is blocked off by the parking lot. A lovely trail could be constructed through this area to link the East end of the Valley on the Southside of the river with the old Yosemite Village site and the Cook's Meadow trail and boardwalk. Currently there is no level route to the west of end of the Valley that doesn't take hikers through the parking lots and other development of Yosemite Village. I have worked as a naturalist in Yosemite for more that three decades. When I lead groups in the Valley I find myself having to apologize for passing the Camp 6 parking area. It 's not a pretty sight. In addition, a parking lot this close to the river is not the pollution hazard. Oil and other toxic substances that leak from motor vehicles should be kept as far away as possible from wetlands. When first time visitors to arrive here they are far from the visitor center and museum. They must walk through parking lots when the small paved trail to the art activity center is flooded in spring. The site of the old warehouse/maintenance complex might be better suited since it is closer to the visitor center. In past plans these facilities were supposed to be removed once there was a replacement warehouse/maintenance complex built in El Portal. Removal of the parking at Camp 6 needs included as an alternative. I urge that it be removed and that this beautiful section of riverbank be restored along with the outlet of Indian Creek. Items 16 and 21: Meadow Impacts- The acreage of meadows in Yosemite Valley has been drastically reduced over the last century due to impacts from roads, fire suppression, the blasting of the terminal moraine, roadside ditches, and compaction from foot and bike traffic. In the workbook the meadows in Yosemite Valley are listed as an ORV. They are in desperate need of restoration. Roads and trails can be rebuilt as causeways to allow water flow. Ditches can be removed. Boardwalks can be built to allow visitors to view the meadows and the valley walls. Where possible, scenic pullouts such as the parking area alongside El Capitan Meadow can be moved away from the meadow and viewsheds can be restored by thinning out conifers that have thrived due to past fire suppression policy. Item 18-Prohibit paddling and floating in the river Item 19 (And 9, 14, and 23)- Why is Valley Camping demand listed in four separate places? Many people want more parking, more lodging units, more campsites. In a 7 mile long valley with meadows, riparian area, oak groves, and rockslide areas is there space for all this? For too long the natural resources in Yosemite Valley have born the brunt of excessive development. Resource protection is a core element of the Wild and Scenic Rivers act. Item 20- Relocate Lodge entrance with walkway and underpass. Segment 4 Item 27: El Portal Valley Oak Woodland- This grove includes over 80 mature trees within an 1/8 mile of the river and river related wetlands. Currently, this unique grove is fragmented by roads, a petroleum transfer facility, a telephone company office, NPS offices, parking, and Yosemite Institute housing, offices, and facilities. As noted in the MRP workbook this development inhibits and in many cases prevents seedling recruitment. Seedlings that do sprout in suitable areas are trampled, eaten by deer, and moved during vegetation required for fire clearance. This ancient old grove needs immediate care to ensure its continued existence. Limiting the number of trees that should be protected based on fragmentation created by historic development is not in the spirit of the Wild and Scenic Rivers act, which calls for not only protection, but restoration of threatened resources. I urge that the areas of the grove east of El Portal Road adjacent to the NPS fiscal office, wetland, and El Portal Hotel complex be included in the protect/restore zone. There are some magnificent old trees by the "temporary" NPS fiscal office that border the old river overflow channel/wetlands. Just because a road was built through the heart of the grove this doesn't mean that the grove on the other side shouldn't be protected as well. To ensure that the grove has adequate recruitment the size of the parking area by the YARTS stop needs to be reduced, fuel-clearing practices should be changed from mechanical to hand clearing (to avoid cutting seedlings), and seedlings should be protected in wire cages. Seedling recruitment can be enhanced by raking leaves and acorns into piles, which will be protected by rail fences from trampling. The NPS fiscal office and its parking lot needs to be removed and the site, that area should be restored. Finally management option 27C is simply bad science. It's like saying we'll make a place for endangered high-elevation Yosemite Toad in Wawona. The condition that allowed for the establishment and growth of the El Portal Valley Oak grove have to do with the river related hydrology, soils, aspect, moisture, and other factors unique to the grove location. Segment 7 Wawona Meadow In Yosemite Valley meadows are noted as an outstanding resource value. Wawona Meadow should also be listed as an ORV. According the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation it is "one of the largest montane meadows in the Central Sierra Nevada and provides habitat for two state endangered birds, great gray owl (Strix nebulosa) and willow flycatcher (Empidonax traillii), as well as several sensitive plant species." I find it hard to understand why Wawona Meadow is not listed as an ORV. Could it have anything to do with a golf course being at the lower end?

Site Plans for El Portal and other River Segments:

During the November MRP meeting in El Portal participants were shown site plans for development of the lower part of Old El Portal and the trailer park/Abbeyville area. These were not included in the workbook and it is not clear why those plans were shown at the meeting or why ones for other river sections are now on the MRP website. Besides, the fact that these plans did not indicate ORV sites, they show excessive infilling in the Valley Oak ORV in old El Portal. These plans seem premature. Showing needs for housing, offices, and parking before transportation planning components and other elements of the MRP are complete doesn't make sense. As a member of the El Portal Town Planning Committee and a long term resident of El Portal I

think there should be community workshops in the future to provide "on the ground" input for site plans in El Portal.

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Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
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Correspondence: Merced River Plan Notes and Ideas [redacted]

I would like to thank Jim Donovan for his input on the terminology used in the plan documents and the spirit of the plan itself.

12-13-11: Segment 1: Merced to Nevada

1) 1A and 1B: Permit reallocation and HSC usage are both viable choices. I would want to know the ratio of users to a % of reduction of ORV. Arbitrary reductions of users alone may not impact the ORV. For this to work we need a value assigned to ORV experience. 2) 2D: Stock is also a function of tours by non-park companies and that needs to be in the equation. Is there a ORV value assigned to per bed and per meal capacity of Merced HSC as tied to stock use? Have you considered diapers for the stock? :) Setting expectation of users of this area and the HSC system that stock supplies the camps and leaves manure is under employed in literature, web and signage. Properly set expectations will enhance a users ORV experience and lessen the recreational user conflicts. Closing the camp is extreme and contrary to historical value of HSC system. I would limit helicopters to rescue only to maximize ORV. 3) 3C Backpackers camps are great though can be improved through signage. Vogelsang is dispersed and it sounds like Merced is as well. The designated campsites such as those at Glen Aulin might help at Merced. 1. 4D and 4E with a 4A option. The reduction to 42 seems arbitrary---see notes above on ORV to Use valuation. I would endeavor to keep the services of Merced HSC on a par with all the other camps so the HSC maintains it's integrity. 2. 5a and 5b are both viable. Also see notes on Glen Aulin option (3c).

Segment 2: Yosemite Valley 2.1: 1. 6B I do not understand the value of river channel complexity as it relates to other ecological values. Under all conditions protecting users from strainer danger is essential. 2. 7A Wilderness requirement of 100' from water is a valuable guideline. Is that applied in the campground areas for campsite location? 3. 8C 4. 9B Ideas: Peak demand has the greatest impact on user experience. For peak periods a reduction of length of stay from 7 to 5 days gains 29% capacity. Camp 4 is the only FCFS option which limits the "spontaneous traveler" camping options. I suggest looking at peak use from the goal of serving BOTH the "planning traveler" and the "spontaneous traveler" to maximize park camping experience. I regularly hear from from would be campers about zero camping availability. Further note the number of campers that are booking back to back stays and limit that ability. Does a reservation system that books the park 5 months in advance serve all users fairly? Looking out 10 years or more can we ever meet peak camping capacity by adding sites? There needs to be a cap on number of sites at some point or the ORV are gonzo. Campsites added for peak use only is an option worth consideration---an overflow campground area for instance. Setting expectations for availability for prospective campers is simply good customer service. (see 2D above) This is especially important for our international visitors that have come so far to visit the park. I suggest enhanced marketing communications so peeps will be prepared with many stay options to optimize their experience. No one wants to "skip" the park due to stay limitations. I don't need more campsites in the valley to make me happy---I need more camping options---everywhere. Choice Rocks. That said, nature specialist Ranger Sally (?) from the White Wolfe campfire on July 30th, 2011, stated that the average stay in the park is 4 hours and of those that stay overnight visit from lodgings outside the park. These stats need to be factored in as well. 1. 10C I am not clear which option results in the biggest bang for the flow buck. I am willing to walk or bike the long way around to insure river function

Segment 2.2 1. 11B is a short term option. Given the whole kitten kaboodle is in the flood plain then options 11C and or A may come to pass courtesy of mother nature. 2. 12A 3. 13B 4. 14B To be consistent with the choice of 12A the camping reestablishment should be limited to the northern area of the former campgrounds. More campsites outside the valley is a favored option. 5. 15E sounds like a thorough long term solution. I am concerned about the viability of underpasses for pedestrians as a four season solution.

Segment 2.3 1. 16A 2. 17A 3. 18 B Allows control and more river play freedom. I would allow commercial use within the high season too. A longer float zone with more put in and take out options would reduce traffic congestion in any one zone. 4. 19A Qualified that rockfall zone campsites are not advisable so nix the east of camp 4 sites. 5. 20A if underpasses prove viable(see above) 20B otherwise. Overpasses require way to much of a footprint and become an architectural blight on the natural valley view.

Segment 2.4 1. 21A It may come to pass over the long term that option 21D or variant will be required to accomplish the Biological ORV for this segment. 2. 22C I prefer to limit paving when possible and this seems a viable option here. 3. 23 D I prefer camping limited to the east side of the valley and cut off new campsites at Camp 4. I love driving into the park and seeing meadow and mountains until you hit House Keeping Campground. Lastly, there must be a valuation of ORV to number of campsites/campers. What is the ratio for any given area of the park be it the valley or Merced HSC. There just is not an infinite and in fact a very finite amount of optimal space for campsites and there will never be enough---ever---in the valley alone. 4. 24A 5. 25A This needs coordination with choices made for Item 18.

Where is segment 3???

Segment 4 1. 26A 2. Options are vague as written. Choice depends on importance of seedling recruitment being done here or at

another location vs the importance of existing infrastructure and the impact of its removal. 3. 28B

Segments 5-8 1. Both 29A and 29B 2. 30A 3. 31B I am concerned that some woody debris management must be done to eliminate strainer hazards and overall safety. 4. 32A Also keep the existing site with redesign and river access designation and add a second site should demand suggest the capacity need. 5. 33A I suggest a balance might be struck by scaling back the impoundments as other sources develop. Further water conservation in Wawona will have a important impact on water requirements. I suggest consulting with water conservation experts.

The following questions are too general to render optimal responses. I suggest further workbooks offer pick lists to expand on that derive from considered possibilities. That said, I did my best to answer.

Ecological and Natural Resource Values How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function?

I like the idea of vegetation as a tool for restoration of river banks. I am not certain what the bioengineered elements are though the more natural the better. I believe there needs to be balance between debris management and "let it be" as the debris impacts elements of safety of river users and integrity of man made river structures.

How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat?

I like to see social trails in meadows restored and when appropriate boardwalks or single natural trails as a replacement. People will go where they are directed so direct people to the sustainable river areas and away from the fragile areas. Also educate the public on best practices while being in the park, by and on the rivers.

Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?

I like to see meadows restored firstly. Secondly I like to see the Merced HSC and Little Yosemite Valley areas addressed as I am a backpacker and fan of the HSC system. It is part of our part Heritage and therefore a purposed focus of the MR plan.

How can we conserve our limited water supply?

First I would look at is as adequate to our needs rather than limited. I would consult with water conservation experts as I cannot comment in a worthwhile manner.

What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality?

I have not seen it mentioned though the inference is there: Leave No Trace. The principles and practices of this philosophy are valuable and can be adapted to non-wilderness experience and applied to the valley ORV and nature experience. Some such principles are right on the back of my wilderness permits.

I suggest the creation of a Friends of the River program that would educate and inform visitors of the best nature practices we all wish to follow.

Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources?

I am not as familiar with these as I would like to be so I suggest guided trips by rangers to the sites in a controlled situation to maximize experience and minimize impact. I am a proponent of both restoration of sites and barriers to protect them.

How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river?

Education. Let them know how to be, play, share and enjoy the rivers and lands surrounding them.

Bear compliance in Tuolumne never worked as long as it was the bears responsibility. Once their protection became peoples' responsibility the experience shifted.

Let the public know the issues and the best practices and use ranger talks and campfires talks to spread the word about stewardship of our park lands.

Visitor Use Management Program If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?

There is a limit to expansion in our finite valley areas. We need to define the maximum allowed use and cap it and then look to solutions such as shuttles to fill the difference at peak times.

Once a cap is determined we could build toward it over a number of years knowing there is an end in site. Having a cap would also energize alternative solution finding as we have a valuable limit line as a not to exceed target.

Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?

I am leery of the term "new routes" . Perhaps you mean new bus lines along existing routes. As a decades long park veteran I travel off peak and focus on the high country so my personal use would be limited. For the average visitor (4 hours!) buses make sense.

My experience of the park for the first time was in a convertible car and wow was that amazing. I also took a tour of the 17 mile drive in the top deck of a double deck bus and that was great.

I suggest merging these experiences using open or glass roofed buses so people see the park in a vehicle that allows even better views than the very limited views from cars. This could make it a real bonus to use the bus/shuttle over personal vehicles.

Success with a bus system will require extraordinary support from the very good valley shuttle system to make "giving up my car" attractive. Many visitors are from cities in the US and many more from other countries that are very accustomed to public transit. The hold outs on buses will be Americans I imagine so giving them a "better than a car experience" into the park would be a boon.

Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?

Yes (PEAK ONLY) Remote parking is great as too many cars are just that too many. I prefer first come first served over reservations in most cases or the mix that is used in for instance Tuolumne Meadows Campground.

Further I suggest a "Hike the Valley" program that encourages visitors to bus in and hike/shuttle around the valley. This would would help leverage visitors out of their cars and into a bus in and hike/shuttle/bike around the valley. I remember putting over 25 miles on my bike in 1995 on the 8 miles of valley trails in just a few days.

Day use reservations would only be required if the demand exceeded the supply of bus transport on a given day. It could be a revenue generator if the entrance fees were restructured to address a mixed use fee system.

It is important to look at turnover especially at peak. Turnover of visitors is often quite quick---in and out in a few hours. A bus system in tandem with a "tour" package might meet the needs of the short term visitor better than parking a car in the valley.

Getting marketing information from visitors would be a worthwhile investment so we know their real needs and wants and how best to provide a transportation and accommodations mix that meets those needs. We are way past more parking spaces! We need to know what we need based on real data.

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 I would support one. I would only use one during peak if I was bringing friends and family to the park for the first time. I pay $20 (proudly) for a 7 day permit. How much would I spend on a day permit? The entrance and departure gate system would need better enforcement to make this system financially viable. I meet people every trip that come in late and leave late and never pay gate fees.

What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities?

Boating, floating, kayaking, canoeing, tubing and river boarding as well as swimming are all good. Of course nothing powered.

We need river recreation management and to that I suggest floating rangers or volunteer river rangers. Perhaps floating river stories hosted by rangers or other volunteers. Greater visitor clarity on put ins and take outs would manage both river traffic and the vehicular transport used to support river access. Land Uses and Associated Developments How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation?

First research the mix---% of day and % of overnight. The ideal solution would be a fluid one based on a daily needs

requirement. A general solution is to work to the seasonal mix and adjust the systems on a seasonal basis.

How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?

Peak only overflow campgrounds for one. Researching the maximum number of people that can be in the valley/park at any one time while protecting river values and control to that number. Parking garages do it. Disney does it. Full is full until someone leaves.

Reduction of length of stay for all lodgers and campers for peak periods makes a lot sense to me.

What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor?

First get the numbers and projections over time. Yes guesstimates and estimates but with a computer model we could get close. We are looking for a formula that says this is max capacity before resource protection is compromised.

Disney employs subtle directing structures to guide people in quantity to where the need to be without them realizing it. At peak they make two way paths one way for instance. Employ that idea in parks. Easier said than done in a wilderness area though with a bit of imagineering it could be done.

Practicalthings like raft/floats shuttles, bike racks on all shuttles, guide "edu-tainment" tours and trips/walks that inform as well as entertain and educate on river values is key.

How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley?

In a word Technology. Over time these goals may require a "Smart Park" system such as IBM advertises for smart cities. Leverage technology to have a real time park use model and manage with real time data.

How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met?

Start now with a long range plan that says this is maximum use and manage backward to today.

If you were doing this same plan in 30 years, 50 years-- would you be able to still be adding parking and campsites---I think not. So be there now and plan accordingly and ride the wave of inspiration that will come from knowing we have limits. Nature has limits. Let's respect those limits. First we need to find them.

What is the ORV devaluation tipping point? In the valley? At Merced HSC? At Little Yosemite Valley?

How can we manage in a way that the tipping point is higher thus allowing more visitors and maintaining a high ORV.

Ecological and Natural Resource Values How do we promote the river's ability to shape the landscape, reduce impediments to free flow, improve geologic/hydrologic process, restore flood-plains and meadows, and protect water quality?

That is one long question. Once restoration is done the key is to maintain it and that can be addressed by guiding visitors to the places in the river and riparian habitats that are more durable for public use.

Education is the other key. Help users know their role and responsibilities in keeping our rivers wild and scenic.

Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values How do we support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection, and inspiration?

Identify key ORV areas and provide viewing areas use areas that are sustainable.

Visitor Use Management Program How do we manage visitor use in a way that balance opportunities for high quality, resource-related experiences in the river corridor with the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural river values today and into the future?

Volume of vehicular and walking traffic needs to be assessed, monitored and managed to optimize the river experience. This

question has been fully addressed in the enumerated responses in my plan responses.

Land Uses and Associated Developments What structures and development are appropriate in the river corridor and support the protection and enhancement of river values?

The Restore Hetch Hetchy organization has studied restoration of the post dam Hetch Hetchy Valley. I would suggest a dialog be opened to see what they can contribute from their study.

I believe choices that value a natural, organic look and feel are essential. Suggestions such as pedestrian overpasses are contrary to a natural park setting. Emphasizing the value of the simple nature experiences of swimming, hiking, climbing and biking is essential. Gone are the days of the "fire fall" and for good reason.

Your Vision Is there a theme or a commonality among your choices? Can your suggestions be implemented? Are they realistic and feasible?

What is missing is an international, global park conservancy. What is limiting our support of Yosemite is nationalism. Our Yosemite is not just a national treasure. It belongs to the world and the world visits it in enormous numbers. One day all the nations "national parks" will be supported in part by international funding...one day soon.

Please contact me should you have questions about my response or want more development of my input.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 131 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Friends of Yosemite Valley Conservation/Preservation
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: December 14, 2011 Don Neubacher, Superintendent Yosemite National Park U. S. National Park Service P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389 Re: Friends of Yosemite Valley Comment on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook Dear Superintendent Neubacher and Yosemite Planning Team: Below please find our comments on the Merced River Plan Alternatives Development Workbook. Before attempting to respond to the Workbook, we would like to address the important matter of creating public perception of the plan itself. An Initial Concern: When planning for the current Merced CMP began, we were greatly encouraged by the good will shown by you and your staff, by your open communication, and by your stated desire to get this Plan done properly with respect to all that has been learned in nearly 10 years of litigation, and in accordance with the Settlement. Something has changed. We recently wrote to you to register our serious concern about the course of the Merced CMP planning process. We noted our disapproval with the absence of transportation and parking, and most importantly the absence of user capacity from this plan so far. Since that letter, we were greatly dismayed to hear Park Spokesman Scott Geddiman tell the Associated Press that the Park Service considers its prior efforts to determine a specific user capacity for Yosemite to have been "well managed". He was registering something in the NPS perception of this, which worries us greatly. This statement contradicts the ruling of a Federal Court. It also contradicts the Settlement Agreement, in which we committed ourselves to working with the Park to create a legally valid user capacity for the Yosemite's Merced for the first time. You may be aware that in 2005 the NPS took the same unfortunate position following the 9th Circuit ruling in 'Merced 1', stating that the Park Service believed that "the Court got it wrong" on capacity. As is well known, 'Merced 2' was soon in court, and parties litigated a nearly identical NPS approach to capacity as 'Merced 1'. The 9th Circuit for a second time found that the NPS approach to capacity violated the law. While it is true that there may be more than one way to fulfill its duty, it is unacceptable that the NPS would cast a positive light on two successive plans for creating a capacity for the Merced which avoided creating a capacity, contrary to law. Capacity as previously conceived was a shell. Plans described a discretionary system, which would be completed eventually, or never, possibly addressing impacts which, although present and ongoing, were never properly analyzed or disclosed. We are deeply concerned that the Park Service would now speak favorably of these failures, while at the very same moment we discover the complete absence of user capacity from the current plan. In our first personal conversation, we noted that building capacity into the Merced Plan from the outset was key to its public success. The Settlement directly addressed this. We urged that the Park Service and Plaintiffs should coordinate a positive message in public statements about capacity as a benefit, an opportunity for all visitors to optimize what is best in an experience of Yosemite. We still believe the public must be educated about this plan, and the meaning and benefit of creating a user capacity for Yosemite, because it would represent a significant cultural shift. The Settlement also addressed working together to project this positive public message. What happened? IF the park Service is preparing a plan that will introduce capacity, then the public deserves to understand the choices being posed from the beginning of alternative development. That moment is about to pass. It is completely inappropriate to frame questions about infrastructure and uses in the absence of analysis and discussion of capacity. We therefore think that this phase of the Plan deserves to be re-done. The park Service needs to foster productive public dialogue around actual capacity choices beginning now. Other Commentary:

Our friend Jeanne Aceto wrote a you lengthy comment letter on the Workbook which we have just read. We agree with virtually all of what she has said with respect to the needs in forming this plan. We are attaching her whole letter in support. Our friends at MERG have also provided you with important input, and made many important points. Our own contribution briefly follows: Capacity is Needed for Alternative Development: Capacity cannot be treated as an "add on" to this plan. Unless something changes soon, this appears to be how the Park intends to proceed. If you do, we think this will result in an irrational Merced CMP which does not correct impacts, does not preserve primary river values, and does not optimize ORV recreational opportunity. By contrast, we think that capacity introduced at the beginning of the plan should be used as the basic rationale for differentiated choice, and for varied outcomes. As we noted above, by not preparing the plan in light of capacity choice,

planners have already inadvertently begun to shut the public out of the process for developing alternatives. Our experience being in the workshops is that the questions about "alternative development", without information about the effects of actual capacity choices, resemble guesswork. This is largely our reaction to the extremely broad questions in the workbook as well. It feels as if you are asking us to provide conclusions or solutions, when we do not know the outlines of the problem we are solving. Which raises a related point? The ORV Baseline Conditions Assessment Report is Still Needed: Jeanne Aceto's discussion of the missing ORV Baseline Conditions Assessment Report (BCAR) is instructive:

"The Report has not been made available to the public in advance of these workshops (and has still not been released), there is no way to know if it has undergone revision. This foundational document is integral to the alternative development planning process'especially as it applies to the Recreation ORV. Without that platform solidly in place connecting the dots to earlier foundational documents, the Alternative Development workshops/workbook deteriorated into the typical feeding frenzy of special interests with the public "voting" for carefully wordsmithed one-line management options/bullet points dealing with unrelated specifics devoid of any back-up documentation explaining what, in fact, the public was even "voting" for".

The basic document summarizing the condition of the ORVs is missing. The outcome is that we are being asked to make decisions affecting ORVs without any information, and with just our personal opinion to guide us. Information is needed before we can begin to respond.

Values Are Needed:

We note the discussion within the workbook of the WSRA. We know that this is a hard enough plan for the NPS to do technically. We think it is made harder to the extent that planners turn attention away from the difficult choices as discussed above, but also away from core values found within the language of the statute. Will public comments without this informed context help you fulfill the WSRA? Maybe. But the Workbook and the public meetings lacked clearly articulated values about the purposes of the WSRA, which is frankly very confusing given the complexity of the questions you are posing to the public. Guidance is desperately needed here too, and there is no need for this to be missing; the WSRA provides the values directed at the heart of this work within the "protect and enhance" language of the statute. This should come to guide the discussion of the capacity-related choices. Yet in this process, it is as if you have turned to the public to pose values as a new and rootless question; "What do you think?", "What do you prefer?", and so on. Very respectfully, this should not be a plan about public opinion, or a survey of the variation of individual taste. Those questions certainly have a place in your study of ORV-related human use and recreation, which we hope is being handled separately and will soon be provided, but that is not the problem at hand. This is a plan about the protection and enhancement of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Merced WSR. As such, questions to the public should involve value-laden choices about capacity, which lead to a reasonable rage of alternatives to protect and enhance river values and the visitor experience. These values are provided by the statute, and if this were not enough the Court has provided interpretation which adds clarity. This Plan can be and must be worked through as a transparent discussion of capacity and the relevant choices for various outcomes. The structure of the alternatives should be related to the proactive and positive value to "protect and enhance" at the heart of the statute. Alternative Development is in Jeopardy:

The lack of capacity in the discussion at this point, and lack of proper guidance from values within the discussion may limit or disable differentiation of alternatives. If this happens, the public will miss the opportunity to understand the relative benefits of varied proposals. But since the public is being asked to choose (or "vote") without adequate information, there is no meaningful way to differentiate between alternatives or make good choices at this point. And so there is no way to define an environmentally preferable alternative. To summarize these first points; we think that developing a range of alternatives for the Merced WSR should derive from discussion of the relative benefits of (grounded, numerically articulated, and well-defined) capacity decisions as they affect ORVs and ORV experiences. The factors used to form alternatives should be transparent, and should promote the statutory "core values" to protect and enhance ORVs /ORV experiences. The plan should engage the public in a discussion of capacity as a mechanism to enact tradeoffs in environmental protection and improvement, and improved experiences. However, such a project is impossible with capacity missing from the Workbook, with basic information on ORV status and condition incomplete, and it is made pointlessly hard by not clearly articulating the core values of the WSRA.

The Plan Should Analyze Ongoing Impacts of Facilities Within the Merced WSR:

The Workbook has a shape now, including small "plans" or sketches for a bevy of areas along the river; "draft concept plans", "area plans", "zones" or whatever they are currently being called. We scanned them in the small time allowed during the open houses, and we will be looking at them further online. We quickly understood much of the overall shape, because we know this shape well. We observe the same hotels, shopping, parking, camping, roads, and so on. In a few cases they are the late versions of area plans we litigated (i.e. the Yosemite Lodge Plan). In short, this is the shape of the Status Quo. The status quo has impacts, and it has a "capacity" of its own. The areas plans brought together at the open house impose the capacity and impacts of the status quo as the starting point of this plan, as conditions assumed as much as suggested, unquestioned as a cliff or a meadow. But this infrastructure is not natural. And in its totality, this infrastructure supports many tourist activities which have nothing to do with the purposes of the WSRA, which degrade the ORVs within the river corridor, and which directly and adversely affect the quantity and quality of river-related and river ?dependent activity possible along the Merced WSR. There is no way to avoid this fact. In it's Ruling, the 9th Circuit wrote in Footnote 5: To illustrate the level of degradation already experienced in the Merced..., we need look no further than the dozens of facilities and services operating within the river corridor, including but not limited to, the many swimming pools, tennis courts, mountain sports shops, restaurants, cafeterias, bars, snack stands and other food and beverage services, gift shops, general merchandise stores, an ice-skating rink, an amphitheater, a specialty gift shop, a camp store, an art activity center, rental facilities for bicycles and rafts, skis and other equipment, a golf course and a [High Sierra Camp] dining hall accommodating 70 people. 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.

The Recreation ORV definitions do briefly mention the human built environment as appropriate to the Merced River corridor recreation experience. (We will discuss the intersection of facilities in wilderness separately). In front country, there is no conflict when some amount of picnic areas, camping, trails, pullouts, pit toilets and so on support the kinds of river-related and river-dependent activities discussed in the recreation ORV . The point made by the 9th, referring to Yosemite Valley, is that while some infrastructure does supports the Recreation ORV, some is obviously unrelated and clearly degrades and detracts from the ORVs, and operates at counter-purposes to the WSR. We think the Workbook and Open Houses have badly misstepped, by uncritically introducing the status quo into this plan without analysis. Fortunately the 9th Circuit provides a corrective. The NPS (should):

"?explain how maintaining such a status quo in the interim would protect or enhance the river's unique values as required under the WRSA.

This is an invitation to prepare an environmental impact statement. Rather than re-introducing Yosemite's historic impacts as new ideas, these impacts should be analyzed, then justified (or not) in relation to the mandate to protect and enhance the Merced WSR. The NPS should define the environmental effects and capacity of the built environment in Yosemite for various buildings, areas and kinds of use. Once defined, each of these human impacts and effects can be judged according to the plan's mission to protect and enhance the ORVs. Many of the buildings, roads, parking spaces, and uses may or may not support the ORVs. But they should be called out as either supporting or detracting effects within the confines of such an analysis. With respect to capacity, we think it is important to recognize that Yosemite is inherently limited. It cannot be all things to all people at the same time. Small and limited places like Yosemite Valley, the riparian zone of the Upper Merced at the HSC, and others throughout the corridor suggest that there is competition for space and opportunities to experience the river's unique values. Removal of some facilities can contribute to expanded options for protection and enhancement of Biological, Cultural, Scenic, and Hydrological ORVs. Removal of other facilities deemed inappropriate might open up the space for some activities known to contribute to the Recreation ORV. We're optimistic some changes would accomplish both. What do we mean by the need to analyze capacity relative to existing infrastructure and uses? As we said before, the capacity analysis for this plan is apparently un-done, and this lack has made it impossible to really answer the questions the Workbook is asking. On the other hand, there does exist infrastructure, which implies a "limit" now (x hotel rooms there; y parking spaces; z campsites?). This information is needed at the same time, in order to understand what impacts and uses exist now, how these are creating ongoing structural limits, and how they might be altered to optimize natural and cultural ORVs, and river related and river dependent experiences. Include Analysis of the Existing Infrastructure?

Without analysis we are confined to common sense gained from your documents and our experience in the Park. Here are some broad areas of concern and opportunity we think are important to look at: Hotels / Restaurants:

What Yosemite's hotels provide can happen anyplace. The 1980 GMP saw this, and moved (perhaps too timidly) to reduce their size and effects inside the Park. The thinking had been that if the capacity was built in the gateway communities, they could be progressively eliminated from the Park; the GMP was to be a start. The Gateways more than rose to the GMP's challenge after 1980, and hotel capacity ? especially in Mariposa and Madera Counties -- grew dramatically. But the GMP did not calculate the sense of entitlement by commercial interests. After the high water in 1997, the NPS prepared a plan to spend 10's of millions of public dollars hardening and upgrading the Yosemite Lodge (and shifting the cost-per-night dramatically upward). Comparable plans arose for Curry Village in time. The same sort of infrastructure changes had been done at Sequoia right before Yosemite's 1997 flood, and the effect was a far more exclusive and profitable overnight hotel, which, though providing recovery of one natural area, removed people from any meaningful contact with nature. The impacts of hotels and restaurants remain huge in Yosemite. We are only a few short years and a couple of lawsuits removed from major efforts by the NPS to reconstruct bigger, better hotels in Yosemite Valley. But in light of the WSRA requirement to optimize river-related and river-dependant activities, continuation on this trajectory would be a tragic mistake. Why? Because the hotels, restaurants, and shops compete in a limited system for the very space and resources which the law requires you to manage in support of river-related and river-dependant activities. First, the hotels generally occupy the best, safest land, (to the exclusion, for example, of un-profitable activities like camping, which have now gone begging for land). Second, the hotels provide a large percentage of their land as guaranteed parking for the paying guests (to the exclusion of day visitors such as hikers and picnickers, whose peak season frustration driving around looking for parking is the worst thing about Yosemite). Third, because the hotels require major inputs of water (impacts to the water table, a severe problem at Wawona; impacts to from expanding the sewer system to accommodate planned hotel expansion of rooms with bath). Fourth, the hotels and restaurants (and stores and gift shops) are served by an unknown number of daily deliveries by huge 3-axel diesel trucks (food, goods for sale, linen, etc.) causing noise and pollution. Fifth, because of associated housing. (Most of what we would have to say about the problem of housing in the park could be inserted right here...). Workers staffing the hotels (many made to work split shifts and unable to commute even if they wanted to) are housed within the Park to staff the hotels, restaurants and shops. These workers in housing have a dramatic footprint (approximately 1600 housed in the Valley alone peak season). Most of these have a car parked somewhere near where they live. Now add numbers 1-5 together. The direct negative impact of the commercial hotel, restaurant, and shopping, and employee housing infrastructure in the limited space of Yosemite is extreme. It is also the biggest consumer of the space needed to create river-related /river dependant recreational experience. It consumes the most space, delivers the least ORV-related experience, and its impacts work against the purposes of the WSRA.

Parking / Transportation

The best summary of parking which we know of is the inventory done by Henrietta DeGroot (for Yosemite Valley). While this

has been an important snapshot, a parking inventory needs to be part of this plan if we are going to reasonably define what we mean by capacity. What we take form Henrietta DeGroot's work is that parking is a limited resource, and is horribly distributed. The lion's share is taken up by permanent employees ? concessionaire and NPS ? and by overnight hotel guests, and campers. A relatively small amount is available to day visitors. Thus, the available parking only poorly supports visitors coming for nature-focused activities, which is also what we experience in Yosemite. A large part of the perceived congestion in Yosemite Valley at peak season is because day visitors are driving around looking for parking. This experience is the very sort of thing which a worked out capacity for Yosemite can address. All of that time looking for parking, adding to congestion on the roads would be better spent experiencing nature in a better-regulated park with these kinds of limitations on use. There are ambiguities in the parking / natural resources connection, especially since much of the frustration with parking currently experienced in Yosemite exacerbated by the removal of roadside parking over the course of a generation. We think that there should be more ways to pull slightly off the road on un-hardened spots, but this solution is probably easy to overstate. What is far more clear to us is that there are existing parking lots completely dedicated to the support of commercial infrastructure, employee housing, and the assumed privilege of hotel guests, and simply re-purposing this parking would go very far towards creating the parking capacity needed to support appropriate recreation in the Merced Corridor. We agree with the Sierra Club that the plan should relate available parking to the number of visitors in Yosemite Valley at one time. An improved Valley shuttle should become the means to move around once parked. We will spare you a fresh rant against the introduction of mass transit in Yosemite. (We are saving it). ALL of the ideas for mass transit in prior plans are so far predicted on limitlessness. Projected resource damage under the growth of mass transit is unacceptable to us. A notable example of damage would be the expansion of roadways to FHWA standards (contrary to NPS Policy), and the unacceptable creation of the Camp 6 impacts to accommodate a transit hub. (You should restore Camp 6; it is sitting over a wet meadow). We believe the social affects of a transit system would be negative, creating greater distance of visitors from an immediate and accessible experience of the river. The NPS should be working to solve immediate problems of congestion and parking availability with a limited use of the automobile-based system that exists. We agree with Jeanne Aceto that the time is past due for the Park to disclaim a generation of false messages about the alleged benefits of shifting to mass transit tourism in Yosemite. Camping: People need more available camping in Yosemite, and there is less now than there has ever been. As we said, the land for this valuable and resource-connected experience is basically in competition with other uses, commercial and administrative. Camping is normally in last place when limited land resources are considered in your plans. Please see our comments above about hotels. We have long advocated the removal of hotel infrastructure in order to accommodate camping. We advocate the removal of the Yosemite Lodge, and its replacement with a campground. Whether or not there is political will to do this yet, we believe the benefits of doing something like this will become apparent once you have completed an impact analysis including the impacts of commercial infrastructure in Yosemite. Connect the dots between the pressure on available resources from commercial and administrative uses, and the lack of space for camping (a river-related and river-dependent activity) and you will see that we are not crazy. The current system is inequitable. There are solutions to every inequity. Merced lake HSC: We have written at length about the Merced Lake HSC before. This point will help us to summarize our other points about infrastructure and uses: there is insufficient information to form the comments which we would like to make. We lack sufficient information on the ongoing impacts of the camp, what unique ORVs and recreational experiences it may support, and which ones it does adversely affects (natural resource affects, recreational conflicts with hikers and backpackers). We consider the Merced HSC a non-conforming use under the Wilderness Act, and the Congress mandated that it be reviewed many years ago. We suspect that it is having a very negative impact on natural ORVs, possibly including avian species, but certainly including a rare wet meadow, and the pristine water quality of the Merced in this reach. It does not support recreational experiences conforming to the "self-sufficient" qualities of the Recreation ORV for the Wild Segment of the Upper Merced. For all these reasons we think this plan should propose to remove it. But just as important is this: the CMP should disclose these impacts to all of us, and then do what the law requires. A Final Thought, and Conclusion: We generally agree with the commentary of Jeanne Aceto on the specific questions posed in the Workbook, and we have attached it. We have written, it would seem, hundreds of pages of administrative commentary over the last 13 years in Yosemite. Many times it was frustrating to us. We felt in the past that the Park Service came to the public with well-formed ideas about what sort of things they wanted to build. It was a lot about building. We had a lot to oppose, and we did. We incorporate herein by reference everything we ever said in the past. This Workbook is ? incomplete. And it frightens us. This plan matters too much. It frightens us because the alternatives development exercise misses the point quite badly. We could comment all night. We have done it before, we have offered up every opinion. For example the underpass? is a capacity issue in disguise, so you should solve that first, and it won't meet the ADA, and it's on an arch site, and the summer traffic volunteers nearly solve it anyway. But we won't go on. You have not provided any information on capacity as the foundational tool needed to improve the Yosemite environment and experience. The Workbook does not provide needed information about current uses and ongoing impacts, which we need in order to suggest change. We will wait for this information before we say anything further. Thank you again for this opportunity to comment. Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 132 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Board of Supervisors County of Tuolumne County Government
Received: Dec,21,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook. As a Gateway Community, the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors appreciates the opportunity to partner with the National Park Service to ensure that Yosemite is available to the general public for future generations. Gateway Communities are vital links to the nation's natural and cultural resources that influence not only the sustainability of the parks, but also the vitality of these unique communities. The workbook provided at the Merced River Plan workshop requested input in a variety of categories and this response will attempt to address the pieces of the puzzle that are of most concern to Tuolumne County.

Vision The priority of the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors is to ensure that Yosemite National Park remains accessible to the general public. We support the purpose in which the National Park System was first created: to conserve the scenery, natural and hsitoric objects, and wildlife to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and such a means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. When making management decisions, the ability of the public to participate in an activity within the Park should be placed at the forefront. Tuolumne County's comments reflect a desire to

emphasize user experience.

Visitor Use Management Program As stated above, the primary concern of Tuolumne County is to ensure that Yosemite exisits for the pleasure of the people. The Workbook states that the demand for day use within the Park has increased, while the infrastructure to support such use has not increased proportionately. In addition to this, the number of campsites has decreased over time creating frustration over the inability to secure affordable lodging within the park.

Our Board feels strongly that through collaborative efforts with Gateway Communities, the National Park System can accomplish their own goals of perserving the natural beauty of the park while ensuring accessibility of the general public through a coordinated visitor and transit center located in Groveland. By embracing the alternative options such as coordinated lodging and transportation, which include entrance to the Park, the impact to Yosemite Park would be a decrease in the demand for parking, ease of movement throughout the Park, and most importantly a better overall visitor experience. Such a visitor center could coordinate camping, lodging, and other services desired by visitors in a way that enhances their experience rather than sending them to the valley floor during high congestion hours and then to discover no lodging is available.

Land Uses and Associated Developments It is recommended that plannig for facilities and developments should place priority for use of limited space (capacity) on visitor users versus that of Park administrative, staff housing, and concessionaire ancillary uses. Once again, through partnerships with Gateway Communities, the National Park System could offer employee housing in the communities immediately adjacent to the Park entrance and offer employee transportation into the parks.

The Workbook contains information pertaining to areas within the park that have sustained damage due to visitor use, such as social trails. Areas such as these, that have experienced high visitor use, should remain accessible to the general public by use of alternative means. Examples of alternative means include use of boardwalks or redesign access points to help facilitate the flow of visitors.

River Values Over time, rivers naturally change their course and this should be the rule for the Merced River unless it impairs critical Yosemite Valley infrastrucutre such as roads and utilities. The rafting experience through the valley should be maintained to avoid significant debris flows during high usage hours. A natural flow with minor modifications which enhance the user experience from an active and passive perspective should be the goal.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer comments on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook. Tuolumne County looks forward to working collaboratively with the National Park System to ensure the long-erm sustainability of Yosemite National Park for future generations.

Correspondence ID: 133 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Board of Supervisors County of Madera County Government
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Fax
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

As District 5 Supervisor for Madera County, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Merced River Plannign Process. As you know, my District is largely composed of southern gateway communities that benefit from tourists visiting the park. There are more than 1,590 lodging units in our immedite area and many visitor services including gas stations, repair facilities, major grocery, pharmacy, and general supply stores. These businesses provide many of the services that are not available in the park. As such, I consider our gateway communities park partners who are directly impacted by park policy.

In my capacity as Supervisor, I also sit on the Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau Board. I agree with many of the comments the YSVB has submitted regarding the Planning Workbook. Specifically: PARKING The 2011 season brought challenges to you and your staff in dealing with the traffic congestion in the valley and at the south entrance station. According to your transportation improvement strategies report from July of this year, you need only restore approximately 2/3 of the parking removed in order to fulfill the immediate need on the "first busiest day". I would strongly recommend developing additional dispersed parking using areas previously impacted in addition to areas where parking has been removed in the past, and continue to provide attendants to facilitate efficient use. Additionally, the use of in-valley shuttles could assist with moving people from parking areas to different park destinations.

I must add that I remain adamantly opposed to the 1980 General Management Plan's goal of continuing to remove parking and eventually closing the valley to private vehicles. Tourists in private vehicles often stop in the gateway communities on their way to the park, offering a steady stream of revenue that the communities would not survive without. Although I agree with the Plan's overarching goal of protecting resources, I firmly believe access to the park should not be restricted.

DAY USE RESERVATIONS The introduction of day use reservation system or any similar system that would restrict access, would stymie visitation and in turn greatly harm our local economy. Many visitors traveling through our communities come from the greater San Joaquin Valley area and visit spntaneously. These potential day-use visitors would potentially find somewhere else to visit.

CAMPING AND PICNIC AREAS I strongly support camping opportunities which for many is the only affordable way to stay overnight in the Valley. I must also encourage restoration of the campsites and picnic areas lost to the 1997 flood. Increasing the

overnight stay capacity for the valley by this means will also help alleviate day use parking shortages. I encourage the Park Service to keep in mind that the Valley experience for a large portion of family visitation is picnicking along the Merced River. To unduly restrict use of the river area for this activity is counter to what the public perceives as a great family-based pastime.

BACK COUNTRY CAMPS AND RAFTING I support back country camps and commercial rafting. Many people do not have the physical ability to access the back country areas of Yosemite. The camps provide a unique opportunity for many visitors to experience what otherwise would be unavailable to them. Supplying the camps by livestock seems to be the least costly and most appropriate form of transporting the goods required. Rafting has become very popular in the valley. I support the concessionaire continuing this activity as this activity encourages visitors to get out of their cars and experience the river and its environment while having fun.

HOUSEKEEPING CAMP As 234 units have been lost to the rock-fall area, I cannot support any additional removal or any relocating of housekeeping units other than for safety issues. As in camping, these accommodations allow visitors with smaller budgets to overnight in Yosemite Valley. This also helps with the day use parking issue.

WAWONA CAMPGROUND Wawona campground is an essential part of the camping experience of Yosemite. Camping near a body of water such as the Merced River, especilly at a moderate elevation, is the most desirable location for most campers. Wawona provides a high quality substitute for camping in Yosemite when Valley sites are full. I recommend not changing the number or configuration of any of the Wawona campground sites. Again camping allows for families with low and moderate incomes to overnight in the park.

SOUTH FORK ACTIVITIES I recommend no changes to what is allowed on the South Fork. Many residents and guests of the privately held land in Wawona use the river for recreation with little or no impact.

PICNIC AREA NEAR STORE/HISTORY CENTER A great part of the congestion is caused from visitors parking and waiting for the Big Tree Shuttle. This issue needs to be addressed in the Mariposa Grove Study. The picnic area should remain. There are few areas in Wawona that allow this activity. The picnic area also serves the guests of the history center and makes for an enjoyable outing combining the history cneter and the picnicking experience.

MERCED RIVER IMPOUNDMENT This is necessary for the survivial of the Wawona community and lodging facilities. The Park Service monitors water useage during seasonal low-water events. The Wawona community, as well as the concessionaire, is very diligent in conservation efforts. The use of the Biledo Spring should not be an option.

In summary, I am hopeful that the National Park Service will be mindful of the many people that desire to visit their National Park. To place an excess of restrictions on uses in the Merced River corridor will only serve to reduce overall visitation and preclude many families from enjoying their park. Instead, I firmly believe that the Park Service should work toward having more campgrounds and picnicking areas to better assist their visitors. These visitors are crucial to the continued success of Yosemite, the National Park System as a whole, and our gateway communities.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to wroking with you toward the mutual goal of enhancing visitor use while protecting the natural and cultural values of the Merced River.

Correspondence ID: 134 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Board of Supervisors County of Mariposa County Government
Received: Dec,12,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

The Board of Supervisors in Mariposa County has received a copy of the Merced River Plan alternatives workbook. At this time, the Board has no formal comments regarding the workbook.

As you know, all activities at Yosemtie National Park have a significant impact on Mariposa County. As the Merced River Plan develops further, the County will have a great deal of interest in the particulars. As outlined in the workbook, of greatest interest will be the Visitor Use Management Plan. Any and all actions regarding visitor use will have an impact on our county.

On behalf of the County, I respectfully request that we be kept fully informed regarding the Visitor Use Management Plan. We will be very interested in reviewing those plans and actively participating in discussions regarding the Park's use.

We appreciate having the opportunity to review these materials and look forward to working with you in the future.

Correspondence ID: 135 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau Recreational Groups
Received: Dec,21,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

Please find enclosed our comments regarding the Merced River planning process. As you know, our bureau is the lead agency representing Madera County for visitor services and marketing. We represent the highway 41 corridor, one of the most traveled arteries feeding Yosemite Natinoal Park. There are over 1,590lodging units in our immediate area and many visitor services such as gasoline stations, repair facilities, major grocery, pharmacy and general supply stores. We provide many of the services that are not available in the park. We consider our region to be a park partner, and have always maintained a very active invovlement in park issues.

The bureau, as well as our constituents in the souther gateway, is very cognizant of the need to balance uses in Yosemite. We believe that since over 95% of Yosemite is wilderness and basically "off limits" to many visitors, access must be provided to as much of the 5 or so percent as possible so that the general public, your constituents, can experience the grandeur of the park without restrictions.

The following will provide our input on most of the aspects delineated in the Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook.

PARKING The 2011 season brought challenges to you and your staff with the traffic congestion in teh valley and at the south entrance station. We continue to believe that parking is the real issue in the valley. Over the years, prior to and after the 1997 flood, many parking spaces have been removed. Most people familiar with park history, including veteran park service employees, agree that at least 3,000 spaces have been removed. According to your transportation improvement strategies report from July of this year, you need only restore approximately 2/3 of the parking removed in orer to fulfill the immediate need on the "first busiest day". Our recommendation is to develop additional dispersed parking using areas previously impacted in addition to areas where parking has been removed such as behind the post office, and contiue to provide attendants to facilitate efficient use. Our bureau remains steadfat in its opposition of the GMP goald of continuing to remove parking and eventually closing the valley to day use parking. We support the use of in-valley shuttles to move people from parking areas to different park destinations. To reiterate, we DO NOT support removal or reduction of any current parking and we DO support additional parking to provide for increased visitation.

DAY USE RESERVATIONS: This concept was introduced in 1997 after the major flood. The plan was immediatetly and vehemently opposed by the gateways and there was virtually no support for the system. We know that the r-introduction of the DUR would again receive major opposition. Our bureau believes that the day use reservation system or any similar system that would restrict access, would stymie visitation and in turn greatly harm our local economy. Many visitors traveling through our communities come from the greater San Joaquin Valley area and visit spontaneously. These potential day use visitors would no doubt find somewhere else to go. Again, just the mere mention of a day use reservation system would drive visitors away.

CAMPING AND PICNIC AREAS: The flood of 1997 damaged many of the campsites in the valley. This led to a loss of approximately 350 sites. The Park Service received emergency funding for repais to the tune of over 175 million dollars. To our knowledge, none of the damaged campsites were rebuilt. This is a diservice to the many generations of families that have camped in Yosemite Valley over many, many years, and to the thousands of others that are turned away from the camping experience in Yosemite. The camping experience provides an opportunity to those of low to moderate income means to overnight in the park. We encourage restoration (rebuilding) of all the campsites and picnic areas lost to the flood. Increasing the overnight stay capacity for the valley by this means will also help alleviate day use parking shortages. We encourage the Park Service to keep in mind that the Valley experience for a large portion of family visitation is picnicking along the Merced River. To unduly restrict use of the river area for this activity is conter to what the public perceives as a great family based past time.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION: All fo the Eastern Madera County Chambers of Commerce, the Yosemte Sierra Visitors, and the Madera County Board of Supervisors continue to opose operating YARTS within or through our county. We understand that the Fresno Council of Governments has approved in concept, operating YARTS from Fresno to Yosemite and is in search of funding. We spoke in opposition to this operation at all of the COG public hearings. We are opposed to the National Park Ser ice providing public monies for the COG YARTS system as well. According to the GMP, as son as a region wide transportation system is in place, the Park Service has the discretion to eliminate all day use parking from Yosemite Valley. Until such time that this option is officially overturned, our bureau cannot consider any public funded regional transportation system operating through our gateway. At this time our bureau supports the private tour companies that operate in our region. We continue to believe that private enterprise can respond adequately to the demand for transit to the park from our area.

BACK COUNTRY CAMPS AND RAFTING: The bureau is in total support of all the back country camps and commercial rafting. Many people do not have the physical ability to access the back country areas of Yosemite. The camps provide a unique opportunity for many,many visitors to experience what otherwise would be unavailable to them. Supplying the camps by livestock seems to be the least costly and most appropriate form of transporting the goods required. Rafting has become very popular in the valley. We support the concessionaire continuing this activity as this activity encourages visitors to get out of their cars and experience the river and its environment while having fun.

HOUSEKEEPING CAMP: 234 units have been lost to the fock-fall area. We do not support any additional removal or any relocating of housekeeping units other than for safety issues. As in camping, these accommodations allow visitors with smaller budgets to overnight in Yosemite Valley. This also helps with the day use parking issue.

WAWONA CAMPGROUND Wawona campground is an essential part of the camping experience of Yosemite. Camping near a body of water such as the Merced River, especilly at a moderate elevation, is the most desirable location for most campers.

Wawona provides a high quality substitute for camping in Yosemite when Valley sites are full. We recommend not changing the number or configuration of any of the Wawona campground sites. Again camping allows for families with low and moderate incomes to overnight in the park.

SOUT FORK ACTIVITIES We recommend no changes to what is allowed on the South Fork. Many residents and guests of the privately held land in Wawona use the river for recreation with little or no impact.

PICNIC AREA NEAR STORE/HISTORY CENTER A great part of the congestion is caused from visitors parking and waiting for the Big Tree Shuttle. This issue needs to be addressed in the Mariposa Grove Study. The picnic area should remain. There are few areas in Wawona that allow this activity. The picnic area also serves the guests of the history center and makes for an enjoyable outing combining the history cneter and the picnicking experience.

MERCED RIVER IMPOUNDMENT This is necessary for the survivial of the Wawona community and lodging facilities. The Park Service monitors water useage during seasonal low-water events. The Wawona communicy, as well as the concessionaire, is very diligent in conservation efforts. The use of the Biledo Spring should not be an option.

In summary, the Yosemite Sierra Visitors bureau is hopeful that the National Park Service will be mindful of the many people that desire to visit their National Park. To place an excess of restrictions on uses in the Merced River corridor will only serve to reduce overall visitation and preclude many families from enjoying their park. Visitors form a constituency for not only Yosemite, but also the National Park System as a whole. Without this constituency, the National Parks will not thrive. The bureau will continue to advocate for all segments of society, no matter the size fo their wallet or color of their skin and their inherent right ot appreciate first-hand the wonder that is Yosemite.

We remain thankful for the opportunity to comment and certainly hope our suggestions are weighed carefully.

Correspondence ID: 136 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Carpe Diem Experience; Mr Half Dome Recreational Groups
Received: Dec,21,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic functions?] Are there not free flowing conditions now? as a seasonal river a lot is out of man's hands anyway.

[How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitats?] Keep people out of the river. No tubing or rafting. There are plenty of raftable rivers outside the park for this. Briceburg area offers commercial trips for those interested.

[How can we conserve our limited water supply?] Thru the park the suply is driven by snowmelt run off. Do not tap out for reservoirs.

[What best management practices must be kept in place to protect water quality?] No dumping or cleaning of cooking gear. Retain outhouses to keep fecal matter out.

[What measures should be taken to contunue to protect cultural resouce integrity, including archeolocial and ethnographic resources?] Involve local approved native American groups to conduct cultural activities. Improve the museum to display artifacts (more than just baskets) to get public aware.

[How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river?] Nature Notes type videos do a lot when posted on YouTube.

[If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?] Underground should be considered. Surface views could be retained with minimal post construction impact.

[Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?] Time is a resource we have a fixed amount of. To transfer and carry all my gear would cut well into the time I can spend in the park. There would nee to be huge locker areas to...

[Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not?] No - see above. Idea - spend the money and get the Tain from Merced to El Portal back and running. People owuld view it as a quaint and would remove cars. Shuttle like they did in...

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] No - a car is a car whether it stays 2 hours or 2 days.

[Would you support the use of a day use parking/vehicle permit?] Depends on how permits are allocated and distributed. Most

plan trips far in advance with accommodations and...

[What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor?] Fishing, rock skipping, Keep people out of the river.

[How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation?] I think day use is due to having to stay outside the park. Increased camping would relieve that. No one is going to drive in for lunch then go back out.

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] No fires allowed. Only a ranger led group fire pit permitted. No motor homes allowed. Permit more density of camping. Keep people out of the river. Increase walk in camping sites.

[What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor?] What damage is being done now? Toilets and trash receptacles should mitigate most.

[How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley?] Internal NPS issue

[How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met?] Remove retail profit generation facilities benefitting only the concessionaire.

[Ecological and Natural Resource Values] People like to be entertained. Create Yosemite Notes quality videos and get them on TV. MORE media coverage is needed.

[Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values] In the overall scheme of life, I do not think that people think of wanting "a connection" to a river. Its a wonderful body of water, but it's just "a river". Don't burn a lot of resources trying to push for a metaphysical connection. Keep it clean and respect it as a resource.

[Visitor Use Management Program] Keep people out of the river and it will survive

[Land Uses and Associated Developments] Restrooms, interpretive signage, walkways. Not retail outlets beyond basic needs. Benches for contemplative inspiration.

[Your vision] Basically, the Merced is a river. It's good that there will be no dams or other impediments to its flow. No more Hetch Techty. Keep people out of it and it will do its natural thing withour our interference.

Correspondence ID: 137 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,21,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: The Happy Isles Nature Center must be connected by bridge to the Happy Isles Trail to the Vernal and Nevada Falls. The Nature Center needs to be integral to the trail for educational purposes. Since the trail is heavily trafficked, the Nature Cneter is the point of information for safety and respect of the hiking experience in Yosemite National Park. Fist time or infrequent visitors have much to learn!

Any new campsites require an analysis of high river levels, traffic, parking and bathroom facilities. Happy Isles Trailhead seems very popular and the people/car situation might be difficult to manage. Without knowing the plan for such an intersection (people/cars) we cannot opine on the expansion of Upper Pines Campgrounds. The idea of increasing campsites outside of the Valley makes sense if combined with public transportation in the Valley.

The bridges are beautiful and historic. Given the issues created by Sugar Pine Bridge, that bridge requires removal.

Correspondence ID: 138 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,21,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Eliminate horse traffic to reduce manure and odor on trails.

Close Merced Lake High Sierra Camp.

Remove stables and commercial use of horses.

Eliminate stock use to reduce riparian damage.

Remove constricting bridges.

[How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat?] Plantings and elimination of commercial horse use of the aprk

[Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?] Meadows

[How can we conserve our limited water supply?] Recycle waste water. Reduce the number of visitors.

[What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality?] Follow former Valley Plan to remove commercial horse stables from teh Valley. Include in the Merced River Plan a requirement for timely removal of commercial horse stables from the Valley.

[How can we increase th availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Spread out camping, away from rivers.

[How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visiotr and resource protection are met?] Eliminate High Sierra Camps and their luxury accommodations which require many mule trails to supply them. This would eliminate the trail depletion, manur3e on the trails and manure powder in the air we breathe along dusty trails. Congress authorized you to remove the camps 25 years ago so get with it.

My vision includes a backpacking experience free fo horses/mules and the associated pollution/degredation to the trails and camps.

Promote hiking and backpacking, not hoseback riding, cushy accommodations and mule trains.

Provide quiet trails, campsites, outlooks and rst stops for contemplation and enjoyment of the beauty of the park.

Correspondence ID: 139 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,13,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: A person taking that walk [Happy Isles to Mist Trail to Nevada Fall and back down John Muir Trial] really gets to experience the Merced River in Yosemite in my opinion. It does not bother me that there are many other people taking at least part of that walk at the same time I am doing it. The river is not hurt by having many eyes and cameras looking at it. Yosemite Valley is too unique and special of a place to expect to visit it in solitude.

Yosemite Valley is a very spacial place on this Earth and there will be the political will to protect it only if many people can personally experience it.

However, there are limits to how many people and cars the Valley can accommodate.

Compared to what I regard as resonable demand, there is a shortage of both camp sites and midpriced lodging in Yosemite Valley at the present time.

We live in very constrained times financially, particularly with the current mood in Congress, so solutions that do not require a lot of extra funding have the best chance of being implemented.

I think campsites should be removed from the immediate vicinity of the river with river access at suitable points. I also thing that all Housekeeping camp units that are between the river and the Housekeeping Camp perimeter road should be removed. If there is unsuitable use next to the river that ruins its scenic nature in Yosemite, for me that is it. If necessary, to service the remaining units, build new restroom facilities inside the perimeter road. Units removed from the valley housing count would be replaced by new camp sites and/or new Yosemite Lodge units.

I agree that vehicle counts in Yosemite Valley need to be limited to the number that can find parking spaces and move about without undue congestion. I think day use permits should be required for days when more vehicles want to enter the valley than can be accommodated there. Here is my vision of how that might work. These permits should be sold only by the park service. Steps should be taken to avoid the situation that happened with the Half Dome climbing tickets. I think the parking lots at Camp 6 and Camp Curry should be paved and lined. There will then be a specific number of vehicles that can be accommodated at those lots and at the Village Store and other smaller lots and then the goal should be approximately 90 or 95% of that many day use cars in the Valley, if that many cars can be accommodated without undue traffic jams. Sell that many day use permits per day. People staying in camp grounds or lodges should drive to the place where they are spending the night and use the shuttle to get around the east end of the valley. Likewise people who have a day use permit should drive to a day use parking area and use the shutte. Those with Handicap permits still have to have a reservationor a day use pass, but they can drive their cars about more instead of using the shuttle. Paperwok would be checked at a Valley Entrance Station at the El Capitan crossover. If

unsold day use passes remain, those without one can be buy one. If none remain, they would be directed to El Portal where they could park and ride (possibly for a fee) a shuttle into the valley. (I am opposed to the development of new parking lots in teh west valley area.) Persons coming into the valley or leaving it could stop at viewpoints, picnic grounds, trailheads, etc. The day use permit system would operate only during times when valley over crowding is likely.

I see no reason to maintain equine sin Yosemite Valley or at Wawona for the purpose of giving trail rides.

Even if one is in a designated wilderness area, the closer one is to Yosemite Valley along a trail, the higher the usage rate one is apt to encounter. I think it is unreasonable to expect the same low encounter rates that one would expect in most wilderness areas in areas that are in a day or two's hiking range of Yosemite Valley.

I belive that camping spaces should be well delineated, not be immediately adjacent to the river, and not in the currently campground free west valley area. I do not think that adding campsites outside of Yosemite Valley will solve the problem as well.

I could support 10C, which replaces the bridges with foot (and I would add "and bicycle") bridges that do not impede the river. However, I see this as an example of a relatively expensive project to accomplish what seems like a technical problem with having a free flowing river. It is not something I could support spending money on when there is so little of it to go around.

I am very opposed to a traffic signal in Yosemite Valley.

Correspondence ID: 140 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,21,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:
To some very large degree, accommodating more people in the same way that they are accommodated today simply degrades the Yosemite experience. Merely tweaking the current mechanisms will simply push important decisions to some future time. As much as I personally detest the limistations imposed by rationing, I would regret even more that my grandchildren would never experience the tranquility and beauty of Yosemite that I did in my younger years.

Private autos touring the valley should be banned. Big busses are awful. Perhaps some smaller vans or tour tractor trains could be used. Admission to the Valley should be by reservation or lottery, as is done in othre parts of the High Sierras. Bicycles could be tansported in for personal day use on a public access truck or vehicle. Endless campgrounds must be removed. Permanent hotels or another motel are less intrusive and less visually polluting and people could stay there. It is just impossible to preserve the scenic valley experience and have it overrun with humans and their activities. If you ration high country access, why not ration valley access? If you still want such great public access to the Valley, then I suggest you hire an Urban Planner for a long term plan to accommodate thousands and plan large construction that is architecturally suitable and fits in a rustic setting. Perhaps we could have a multi-story parking-camping strucutre with toilets, stores, gas station, restaurantall incorporated into one or two taseful multistory buildings befitting a large city.

The High Sierra Camps (HSC) are a different story. For some historical reason they persist as an anachronism. Relatively few people use them and they are very expensive, and therefore elitist. The damage to the environment by their pack animal supply chains, the need to use water and rid themselves of waste products is appalling. Likely pollution of Merced River headwaters is only one reason to remove them.

Correspondence ID: 141 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,21,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:
In my opinion the High Sierra Camps represent an environmental justice issue. Their use is limited to a very expensive lotter system which is unfair to those who cannot affort the fee or do not have the luck of the draw. Concessioners should nto be allowed to profit from somethign that belongs to all Americans.

[5. Little Yosemite Valley ackpacker's Campground] Add additional composting toilets to address human waste concerns or provide waste packets to backpackers as is done on Mt. Whitney.

[8. Cultural ORV] Bring ethnographic resources to the attention of visitors. Educate them about the cultural significance.

[9. Camping Demand] Convert concessioner stables to campgrounds.

[16. Camp 6 Intersection] There should be no pedestrian over/under crossings. Congestion problems should nto be solved by adding new structures.

[16. Leidig Meadow] Boardwalks detract from teh natural ORVs of the meadows. Use temporary fencing to direct use away

from impacted areas. Visitors need to be educated as to the fragile nature of this ecosystem.

[18. Paddling and Floating] Allow private floating by permit. Open a longer stretch of the river for this use (from Clark's Bridge to Pohono Bridge). Allow use throughout the year as long as water conditions are suitable. Prohibit commercial floating. To limit resource impacts, designate vessel put-in and take-out locations. I cannot stress enough my distaste for commercial concessionaires operating for profit in Yosemite National Park. This park belongs to all of us and no single individual, company, or corporation should be allowed to profit from its use.

[19. Valley Camping Demand] As was indicated under Merced River Management Challenges, Land Uses and Associated Developments, 62% of overnight use is accommodated by lodging. I consider this an environmental justice issue. It is unfair to turn those away who wish to experience the Valley by camping out under the stars in favor of those who have the wealth to stay in thte lodge. I suggest eliminating or relocating Yosemite Lodge out of the Valley and perhaps out of the Park. Shuttles can be provided to transport Lodge visitors into the Park. If not for the historical significance of the Ahwahnee, I would recommend its removal as well. Additional campsites coudl be provided as well as temporary tent camps in the vacated lodge area. Removal of the lodge would eliminate parking and congestion problems as well.

[21. El Cap Meadow] Installing boardwalks and viewing platforms will intrude on the scenic ORVs of the area. Use temporary rail fencing to direct use away from impacted areas. Selectively remove conifers on the north side of the road to improve viewing.

[22. West Pohono Bridge] No paving, no curbing. If pacing is necessary, use non-petroleum based materials.

[24. Cathedral Beach Picnic Area] Provide a delineated loop road for unloading with parking farther away from the picnic area.

[28.Maintenance Administrative Complex] Relocate parking from river's edge. Build new parking east of Foresta Road at the Administrative Facility (west of office/warehouse building or in front of waste water treatment plant). Restore sites between Foresta Rd. and the river. Build new parking in front of waste water treatment plant using non-petroleum based materials.

[31. South Fork Padldig and Floating] Do not allow for commercial boating, only private paddling and floating with limits if necessary.

[33. Wawona Impoundment] Eliminate or relocate unnecessary development that requires surface water withdrawals.

I won't pretend to be a hydrologist, but I believe that you cannot control the river. It will flow where it wants. The best thing we can dod is to understand this and not put obstacles in its way. Bridges should be temporary and moveable. Structures should be temporary and moveable. This is why I advocate for campgrounds in lieu of lodging facilities.

Educate educate, educate! Visitors need to understand how fragile this ecosystem is. If we must, construct temporary barriers such as rail fences. Boardwalks only sere to detract form thescenic ORVs and should not be considered.

There should be no residential lodging in the Valley, especially lodging provided for concessionaire employees. They should reside outside of the Park and be shuttled in.

Reove all asphalt (petroleum based) surfaces for starters by replacing all parking lots and trails with soil stabilization products such as NaturalPave XL Resin Pavement and EMC Squared. These products have been successfully used at Lake Merritt in Oakland, California; Ft. Vancouver, Washington; Evergreen Community College; and Springs Preserve, Las Vegas, Nevada to name a few.

I do support bus services and utilize the YARTS system from Merced. At a cost of $20.00 round trip and no park entry fee it's a great deal. My friends in Fresno are envious.

I may use a day use parking/vehicle permit, however, I would prefer remote parkingand shuttle system.

I would support a day use parking/vehicle permit system provided a reservation system is not required.

Additional camping sites only in areas presently occupied with development such as the DNC stables are but not in the west Valley.

Increased bicycle oportunities throughout the Valley, including west Valley to Pohono Bridge. Asphalt trails are not necessary.

Eliminate all commercial development and residential support. All retail and food services should be maintained outside of the park and thus allowing for more visitor use.

We need to experience Yosemite the way John Muir did. WE don't need restaurants, gift shops, horseback rides, rafting adventures, full service hotels. We need to be able to enjoy the sounds of nature, breath in the fresh air, look upong the vistas with awe, and dip our toes in the cold, clear water of the Merced River. The priority is the wilderness experience, period!

Yosemite Valley is a specialplace. It is ever chanign. The river flows, the rocks fall. There is no place in Yosemite Valley that is safe from rock falls or flood waters. Therefore, all structures in the Valley should be temporary. The only residents in the Valley should be essential personnel necessary for the protection of the visitors and the environment. All who enter the Valley should be aware that they enter at their own risk and that risk could be great. For me the reward is worth the risk.

Correspondence ID: 142 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Reduce day rides from Valley to Nevada overlook that's where the maure problem is worse. Reduce width of trail from Nevada to Merced Lake. Consider removing trail from wet areas (Echo Valley) to higher ground.

Aside from major restoration projects (i.e. bridge removed) NPS could promote those values thorugh education (interp. programs, school programs, internships) and restoration efforts that include volunteer work.Volunteers are great park advocates.

Keep the park accessible for everyone, including those who don't want to drive to the park, meaning more efficient public transportation. Don't exclude or aleviate certain groups of visitors, such as bicycle riders - make roads safer for them. Don't exclude or eliminate new generations whose understanding of the world pass threw their electronic gadgets.

Increase public transportation routes and hours of operation.

Promote public transporation from all gateway communities and from airports such as Fresno, Sacramento, and Bay Area airports.

Consider day use permits for busy summer days. Offer the option of waiving the permit if visitor use public transportation.

Offer parking options outside of the Park (El Portal, Fish Camp, Big Oak Flat, Lee Vining) The parking facilities would be associated with a public transportation option frequent runs, in and out of the park.

Promote bicycle use once in Yosemite Valley.

Increase camping and picnic opportunities.

Keep commercial facilities and its supporting services operating at current levels.

Whenever applicable, remove outdated structures that directly affect the river's free flowing condition and riparian areas including meadows.

Improve communication infrastructure (cables, phone lines, cell phone towers)

Promote bicycle use ing Yosemite Valley, including designating old roads and underutilized trails for bike use. Designate bike lane in the Valley loop road.

Correspondence ID: 143 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: All visitors driving private cars entering Yosemite through one of the four park entrances will be given a color coded plastic 3x5 inch car pass with a loop string attached that will be looped around the rearview mirror so as to be easily visible from teh outside (Tour busses are exempt from these pases, with the understanding that they may not be used for touring in the valley) Drivers will also receive a single page 81/2 x11 red colored information sheed outlining the color coded car pass system, its rules and consequences of being cited and fined. A posted fine of $100 would be sufficient to discourage violators. Overnight visitors with lodging/campground reservations will receive a colr code one car pass at the park entrance and will immediately proceed to their place of lodging for check in. Upon registering, the clerk will collect eh color code one car pass and immediately exchange it for a color code two car pass which must be mounted immediately on teh car rear view mirror. This particular car pass will have a night reflector visible from the outside of the vehicle. After moving into the accommodations, the car must be immediately and permanently parked for the duration of the visitor's stay. Any car with a color code two carpass found driving outside the parking lot will be immediately cited and fined. When checking out, the returned car pass which will allow the car to exit the Valley, westbound only. Eastbound cars will be cited and fined. ONly color code 3 pass cars are allowed on the exit road, west bound only. Day use visitos will be given a color code four car pass at the park entance which will be good for a day use parking space. Any car with a color code 4 car pass touring outside the day use parking lot will be immediately cited and

fined. All cars with the color code 4 car pass must clear the park by 10 pm or be cited and fined. (a simlpe midnight patrol by park rangers will confirm the proper color code two car pass of all parked cars.) When exiting the day use parking lot, the attendant will exchange the color code 4 for a color code 3 pass. Day use visitors who hope to find night lodging via vacancies or cancellations will also be given a color code 4 car pass at teh park entrance. Upon successful room registration, the clerk will give the visitor a color code two car pass. Drivers motoring through Yosemite NP on their way to another outside destination will be given a color code 5 car pass at the park entrance which will be good only for through traffic via Tioga Pass or the three western exists. These drivers may not enter Yoseite Valley east of the Pohono Bridge cross Valley road, or they may be given a color code 4 day use pass. NPS and concessionaire employees will be given a special color code car pass for their private cars. Thier cars must be permanently parked in the employee parkinglot. Their car movement will be allowed only on the westboud North Side Drive to exit the park. Any east bound movement along South Side Drive may be cause for citation and fine except in extenuating circumstances or if returning home from outside the park. All visitor and employee movement whithin the Valley must be by Shuttle bus, bike, skating, or walking. All intervalley car travel may be cited. Visitors wishing to visit Glacier Point, Wawona Historic Village, the big trees, or Tuolumne Meadows will usenewly created shuttle bus extensions. Visitors wishing to visit these places on their way out of the park may do so with their color code 3 car pass. Upon exiting the park, all color code car passes must be turned in a t the park exit ranger station to get a $1.00 refund. Special driving needs may be accommodated by park rangers at the four park entrances, any registration clerk or equivalent, as the need arises. All employee movement in the Valley by motor bikes, motorcycles, or equivalent, may be authorized on an individual basis. During the off-peak seasons of fall, winter, and spring, this system could be liftes as visitor bolume decreases, and be reinstated during the summer peak. All NPS and concessionaire vehicles will be given an unlimited usage car pass if vehicles are un marked. No private cars will be allowed to stop or park at any road turnout for sightseeing. All cars must be kept moving directly to their destination of overnight lodging/camping or day use parking lot. Only shuttle or sigh seeing busses may stop for sight seeing. There may be other categories of car trafficking not covered by the above, but these can be handlesd as the need arises within the framework outlined above.

A new location for the east Valley shuttle bus connector stop at Curry Village is necessary. Teh current location, in the Curry Village parking lot, puts the bus stop in the middle of a highly congested vehicle and pedestrian area, which congests the parking lot even more. To help spread out the vehicles and pedestrians to other Valley areas thereby reducing congestion, a goal of the GMP, the parking lot at the existing Curry Ice Rink/river raft ride site would be a logical (and exisitng) place for the Curry shuttle bus stop.

The current practice of using the Curry Village parking lot as the primary day use parking lot has created a parking lot that is too crowded and congested, not only with cars, and shuttle buses, but also with pedestrians. A simple resolution to this dilemma is to take all the day use parking areas for the entire Valley, and place them into the Lower River Campground, which is already in place, level and under tree cover so as not to be visible from Glacier Point. This is a natural location as it is within walking distance to almost all of the east Valley areas of interest and would not require the creation of a new day use parking lot at either Taft Toe or Pohono Quarry. Restroom are already on site.

Correspondence ID: 144 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Add at least one campground along Tioga Road and Hwy 41. Camping opportunities in Yosemite should be increased, not decreased.

Remove social trails and restore meadow with footbridges. DO NOT install fencing. Install signs to educate visitors.

[17Swinging Bridge] Redesign picnic area in its current location to better manage visitor tuse. Identify additional parking on the south side of south Side Drive.

Permit swimming and water play. Limit size of paddling and floating water craft. Designate put-in adn take-out points.

DO NOT add campgrounds east of Camp 4, south of NOrthside Drive, or eastside of Yosemite Lodge.

Relocate lodge entrance and implement an electronically controlled intersection for both vehicles and pedestrians during peak periods. An overpass is worthless without accessibility.

Better educate public on leave-no-trace principles and behavior. Most people who camp in this area are woefully ignorant.

Correspondence ID: 145 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Non-NPS Employee in the Park
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Reduce how often visitors shower by upping how much a shower costs.

I used to use YARTS when it was free, but my employer does not give me a stipend and the bus times are not favorable.

[Would you support remote parking and shuttle services?] YES! It neds to be more frequent with smaller buses for

employees/off-season plus add more bike racks.

Why not have "day of" reservations for people who leave their car at home/ Mariposa/ Groveland/ Oakhurst?

Limit number of cars (permits) for day and overnight use. "Discounts" for using the bus (meaning higher car pass fees).

We do not need as much "gift shot schlock" in the concessionaire stores.

EP trailer court as housing not campgrounds unless it is a bike/hike campground. Restore housing at the trailer court.

Bike/hike campground at Chinquapin and ?? other locations along 41.

No parking at Taft Toe, Mariposa/Oakhurst instead.

More parking at the Ahwahnee.

Pedestrians and bicyclists should be FIRST. Motorized transport should pay more, especially PRIVATE CARS. Employees should have their own shuttle that is chaper than driving.

Get rid of so much stock use. High Sierra Camps do not need to provide linens, just blankets. People bring "sleep sacks" ala youth hostel style. NO private packers - they have the whole NORTH of the park.

Wouldn't it be amazing to bike/hike into Yosemite? The old rr bed restored with small campgrounds along the way? Keep the 140 hwy and stock the cg with necessities. If there was a bike and hike trail along the old rr grade then it would make sense to have a small, walk-in campground in El Portal. Also widen 140, the all-season highway to have a shoulder - of course if we actually went to no cars in the Valley, this wouldn't be an issue.

Have trails near the river so folks can be inspired by being near the river- this thing of making pedestrians walk along the road is dumb.

We don't need so many pony rides (mules). Sure it's "natural" but in the 1860's there was not this incredible amount of horse traffic (and therefore manure) concentrated in one place - Mirror Lake Loopa nd the JMT.

Encourage reduced fees for those who take YARTS in. Better bike racks (or just a bike rack!) on teh shuttles. Look at Zion, granted their camping is out of the Valley, but what if you could arrive on a bust tht did campground stops. disgorge you, camping gear, and bikes, all at a reduced rate vs. cars? What is you could arrive by bus and do the same without bikes? What if private vehicles were charged 2X the amount? Don't you think it's odd that 3 bicyclists pay MORE than a car with one person? How does that fit inot the Park's climate change vision?

Camping bus - reduced rate, park in Mariposa/Oakhurst catch at 8am, noon, 3pm, and 5pm NO campground in EP, housing instead for staff.

We need group camping.

I think the old Pine Lodging with shared baths would be good to replace although if that won't happen, the Pine/Oak campground. But no flush toilets, no showers, no hookups for RVs, let's camp.

AS for road crossing, build an overpass for visitors. There are a variety of options for ramps in the Mtn View CA area on the Stevens Creek Tr. Yes, it would be a visible structure but putting pedestian/bicyclist outside not in a tunnel is important. More campgrounds, west end woodlot campground.

Better bike trails. Multi-use trails are nice, however, with almost 10K people on the trail a day with strollers, dogs, toddlers, grandparents, lovers etc., it would be better to park the cars and let the bicyclists and shuttle buses share a lane.

River campgrounds that don't have sewer pipes that can burst, etc.

Correspondence ID: 146 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [How can we conserve our limited water supply?] Inventory and mange riparian and underground water supply.

[What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corrider?] Observation, camera use, hiking, nature appreciation, protect existing volunteer trails. Allow continued access where BMP appropriate.

NPS Merced River Planning Team: 1. Evaluate all reasonable input 2. NPS plannign team dialogue 3. Decision by NPS plannign team 4. REcomment to the NPS management

Limit development to existing structures except: Repair and install meadow protection and trail barriers where needed.

Correspondence ID: 147 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,01,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?] Out of sight from main road around the valley

[Would you support bus services along new routes to the park?] I would not use because I don't want to pack ice chest, etc. on bus. I do take shuttle to Mariposa Grove when I want to hike back to Wawona but if I am hiking in the groe, I want to start earlier.

[Would you support remote parking and shuttle services?] Not ot the exclusion of the option to drive in. I have also taken hiker bus to Glacier Point to hike the Panorama Trail to the Valley but it leaves later than I prefer.

[If day use vehicular access were to e limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] I'm afraid we weould see them on EBay... same as Half Dome permits. I hate permit/reservations. would reather close entrance road when capacity is reached.

[Would you support the use of a day use parking/vehicle permit?] Rather than issue permits, just closed the road access when limit is reached.

[How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley?] Move the courthouse to El Portal or Mariposa

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Restore sites wiped out by floods. Keep camping to same sites as pre-flood.

I would like to see Calif residents have a day lead time or some preference. [camping and other permit reservation systems]

I think most of the HSC hikers come from Voglesang or Sunrise; not from Nevada Falls.

This was my first year I was able to hike in this park of hte wilderness and I was able to do because of hte HSC. I am 70 years old and it was awesome. The HSC educate the campers and make them very aware of making as little impact as possible.

Remove bus pakring and any Mariposa Grove parking from White Store/History Center. Can more parking for the Mariposa Grove be provided near the Entrance Station?

Do not connect campground bathrooms to Wawona which is nearing capacity. Home owners paid lots of money to build it and contiue to pay service fees to park service. Park service can pay to enlarge or build one for the campground fom the fees collected.

Also provide porta-potties or somthing more permanent at Swinging Bridge and Flat Rocks Swimming area. Do not allow SDA camp to expand, occupancy counts.

[29. Wawona Campground] Leave as is. Enforce # of people per site. Remove fallen trees across beachers that campers use; such as the large fallen tree across the large beach near amphitheatre in Section B. Allow day time picnicking in A section. Allow fishermen entrance and parking in the campground area.

New campgrounds only east of Camp 4, not the 3 other locations.

[32. Picnic Area Near Wawona Store] Relocate near wood burning area - upriver from covered bridge. Now there are bulldozers, trucks, etc. parked near river. Provide parking in area.

Correspondence ID: 148 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Stop woody debris removal

Restore social trails, restore hydro function, boarkdwalks, prescribed fire with tribes

[Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?] El Cap Meadow, Housekeeping Camp, Swinging Bridge/Leidig Meadow

Low flow faucets, toilets, washers, showers. Remove pool from Valley. Remove Golf Course from Wawona.

[What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources?] Document all sites, educate visitors, remove acce3ss points from sensitive sites.

[If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?] NO!!!

[Would you suppor tbus services along new routes into the park?] Yes, but they would need to have extensive runs both very early and late.

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] Yes but only in peak season. How to prevent scalping/resale? What about employees?

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Make more camping available outside of Valley in park and outside of park.

[How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley?] Reduce number of buildings. Move more admin use to El Portal. What about Lee Vining satellite office? Or expand Hodgdon or Wawona admin oportunities?

[2. Merced Lake High Sierra Camp] Close it! Its impacts affects all but only benefits small % of users.

[4. Merced Lake Wilderness Impacts] Unacceptable impact to Wilderness is occurring. Restore the Wilderness!

Restore hydrologic function, remove rip rap and channelization. Restore meadows. Implement boardwalks. Restore riparian zones, remove all camping and infrastructure from riparian areas. Stop woody debris removal. Eliminate rafting from the Valley.Designate river access points.

Designate river accespoints with eductional displays.

Make the park more wild!

Our entire world is increasingly developed. Make YOSE an example of restoration, modern management, and sustainability. Less is more! Remember, many parks have no concessions, water, or ammenities in them!

Public transportation! Parking and camping outside of park.

Resource restoration and conservation must come first. Teh subtle and steady degradation of the habitat is not appropriate in a National Park, in Wilderness or along a wild and scenic river. Comfort, convenience and capacity may need to be compromised to support and restore ecologic function. Status quo will not continue to work! Camping, parking admin and living quarters should be shifted to El Portal or elsewhere to reduce pressure on the Valley. Automobiles must be reduced in peak season - it is not only an anoyance but a safety issue. Many people in the public will continue to push for more camping, parking, and concessions but the Park must protect resources first. The public are often not informed/aware of the resource damage that has occured and continues to occur. Change is difficult but if the park wants to preserve these resources "into perpetuity" action must be taken. If we don't stand for the resources, who will?

Remove inappropriate development.

Correspondence ID: 149 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form

Correspondence:

[How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat?] Fencing and signage at first, replant and restore, then just signage.

[Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?] Riparian zones and wetlands

[How can we conserve our limited water supply?] Low-flow showerheads, faucets and toilets. Educate visitors (signs in restrooms)

[What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality?] -Careful Management and maintenance of the sewage system to prevent spills and contamination -Placing vault toilets at popular turn-outs, trailheads, etc... -Taking care with street run-off, can we filter any of this?

[If the National Park Service were to expand existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?] Yosemite is already over-used in the summer time. Parking in The Valley should not be increased.

[Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?] If there was bus service (regular at dependable morning and afternoon hours) to Foresta/Crane Flat, I would use the service.

[Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not?] Yes if it did not increase the number of people using The Valley. There are already too many people using The Valley in the summer.

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] I wonder if having pay stations further outside of the park on entrance highways would be a better option - giving people advanced notice to go elsewhere if the park's day use quota has been met.

[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?] I'm not sure what this means - Do you buy it online?

[What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities?] Hiking, paddling/floating, swimming, sitting, painting, wading, playing

There should be a certain number of day use parking spaces that are available first come, first serve. Once they are distributed each day, no other can enter (to go to The Valley) until a space opens up.

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] If the number of sites must increase, locate them in the forested areas resistant to impact.

[What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor?] More interp/education rangers and law enforcement patrols.

[How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in the Yosemite Valley?] I feel like it is being used efficiently already.

Segment 1: Merced River Above Nevada Fall 1B - I don't think there are too many backpackers who camp outside High Sierra camps as a rule. I do believe the number of High Sierra campers impacts the experience of other on the trail. The numbers staying at the camps should be incorporated into quotas, but not take away opportunities for dispersed camping. 2C- Definitely. Concessionaire stock use is the main stock use. If stock was not being used to maintain the camps, there would be far less stock impact on trails/waterways/visitors. 3C- If the camps stays open, the backpackers campground should remain. If the camp closes, allow dispersed camping. 4A, B and E 5B- I think day use traffic takes away the feeling of solitude more so than backpackers in LYV.

Segment 2: Yosemite Valley 6A - Combo of 7 A and B 8 A and B - Interpret restoration areas 9D - Retain the current number of campgrounds in The Valley, there is too much impact from visitors in the summer as it is anyway. The only way I might change my stance on this would be if the park limited day use. If that was possible, I might encourage more campsites with the hope that people would leave their cars at the campsite and walk/bus/bike around. 10C - Good balance for access and river 11A 12C 13B 14C 15F - Realign intersection to four-way stop, use utility corridor for in-bound traffic and use seasonal crossing signals 16C - What about formalizing a trail along the perimeter of the meadow? 17D - Dispersing visitor use is key 18E - Limit number of concession boats per day, increase distance for travel 19C 20C 21 A and B 22C 23C - If adding campgrounds would reduce the vehicle traffic in Yosemite Valley, the only place I would feel comfortable adding campgrounds in The Valley would be at Yellow Pines. 24A 25A My biggest concerns in regard to camping and visitation stem from a need for access for people who cannot afford to stay in hotels and tent cabins. Those of us from lower social economic groups deserve the right to stay overnight in Yosemite too.

Segment 4: El Portal 26B 27 C and D 28 A or B - I am not sure where the option B is located and what it would impact. If it is developed/impacted already, might as well.

Segment 5,6,7, and 8 29A - Relocate those too close to the river 30A 31C - Allow floating and paddling, designate put-ins and take-outs. I don't see how you could realistically limit the number of boats with our current level of ranger staff. 32A 33B - Is it possible to drill wells?

[How do we promote the river's ability to shape the landscapre, reduce impediments to free flow, improve geologic/hydrologic process, restore flood-plains and meadows, and protect water quality?] Where possbile, remove riprap and old bridges and replace with bio-stabilization and less restrictive foot bridges. Remove campsites/tent cabins closest to the riparian ares.

[How do we manage visitor use in a way that balance opportunities for high quality, resource-related experiences in the river corridor with the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural river values today and into the future?] Limit concessioner rentals of boats and mule rides. Designate put-in and take-out locations. Increase visitor education of riparian zones, water quality, and impact.

[How do we support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced and its unique values as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection, and inspiration?] Reduce the number of concessioner boat rentals per day to minimize impact on beaches and river banks, while allowing for private floating and paddling. Reduce the number of hikers using the Merced River HSC so as to increase opportunites for solitude and decrease the sock use of those trails. Because not all people can handle hiking huge distances or toting their own backpack, the HSCs serve an important role in allowing access to a greater diversity of visitors. I just hink the numbers should be reduced.

[What structures and development are appropriate in the river corridor and support the protection and enhancement of river values?] Basic camping and picnicing, hiking trails and boating, put-ins and put-outs are appropriate in the river corridor.

Correspondence ID: 150 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,01,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence:
Remove human created structures (bridges, buildings, campgrounds) from the floodplain and riparian areas. Discontinue removal of woody debris and restore riparian vegetation. Boardwalks and restoration fencing in meadows and sensitive riparian areas Design river access points in resilient locations Remove human structures (buildings, picnic areas, etc.) from sensitive areas

[Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?] Upper and Lower Rivers Campground Housekeeping Camp Leidig and El Cap Meadows Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee bridges

[What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality?] Water quality sampling Keeping toilets, roads, and othe rhuman structures away from waterways and other bodies of water Keeping composting toilets in high visitor use areas in the backcountry to prevent contamination from catholes Encourging people to dig catholes well away from streams

[What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integity, including archeological and ethnographic resources?] Stabilize archeological sites as needed. Use fencing and other deterrents to discourage damage from visitors.

The parking inventory should be placed outside of the park. It should be enough to accommodate vehicles that won't be able to find parking in the valley during peak hours/seasons. Shuttles should be provided.

I would definitely be in support of this [bus services along new routes] if it were helpful in maintaining a vehicle quota system in teh Valley.

...there should be a quota on the number of vehicles allowed in Yosemite Valley (just as in Zion, Grand Canyon, Devil's Post Pile) to reduce visitor impacts and create a better experience for visitors.

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day user reservations apprpriate?] Yes but there should also be some first come, first serve available as well.

[How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation?] By using a quota system for places likethe valley and requireing permits in the backcountry. It may be worth considering day use permits for high traffic trails, such as the Mist Trail.

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Move camping (or new camping areas) to places outside of Yosemite Valley. The Valley is already severly overtaxed.

[What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resource protection and management of user capacity in

teh Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor?] Most important is to have a quota system for high traffic areas (like Yosemite Valley). It's also important that human structures, picnic areas, trails, and campgrounds be placed in the most resilient locations. The existing services/amenities level should be sufficient if quotas are kept for the Valley.

[How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met?] Of vital importance is to protect futher resource damage in the Valley. This shold be the priority. Second to that should be providing the best experience possible to visitors. This can be done by herding human traffic into the most resilient areas or by using appropriate measures in sensitive areas (like meadows) with boardwalks. As said before, maintaining a quota could also provide a better experience by prventing over crowding associated with traffic (vehicles).

Do not add any new campgrounds or expand existing campgrounds in Yosemite Valley. Relocate or remove campsites (as possible) that are within the high water mark/riparian zone. Design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas.

Remove the Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee bridges to restore free flowing river conditions. Replace bridges with footbridges that are designed to protect natural river conditions.

Fully restore the floodplain and riparian areas at Upper and Lower Rivers campgrounds.

At Camp 6, design a roundabout and pedestrian undercrossing.

At Leidig and El Cap Meadows, install boardwlaks and restoration fencing to limit foot traffic in these areas and allow for meadow recovery from trampling.

Remove the existing picnic area and parking lot at Swinging Bridge. Relocate the bathrooms to Sentinel Beach area. restore riparian vegetation.

Redesign the Cathedral Beach picnic area at its current size (do not expand) to better manage visitor use and to protect sensitive areas.

At Yosemite Lodge intersection, relocate the lodge entrance and replace with a pedestrian promenade and underpass for pedestrian access to Yosemite Falls.

Repurpose sites as needed where the current stand of Valley Oaks survives. Restore teh area when infrastrucutre is removed in the future.

Decrease the number of wilderness permits between LYV and Merced Lake to decrease overall trail use. Incorporate High Sierra Camp use into trailhead quotas.

Close or reduce down to 30 beds or less the Merced Lake HSC, which would remove or reduce development in a designated wilderness area. This would also decrease the number of stock needed to maintain the camp and trails leading to it.

Reduce amenities and the Merced Lake HSC, such as food service and showers, which take away from teh overall wilderness character. This would also decrease stock use.

Retain the Merced Lake Backpackers campground so that visitor use is concentrated. Reduce use by lowering trailhead quota.

Retain the LYV Backpacker's campground so that use is concentrated. Retain the composting toilet to meet the needs of concentrated camping and to avoid resource pollution. Reduce trailhead quota to greater than 25%.

Probably teh single most important thing that can be done to protect the Merced River is to remoe any human strucutres, such as hosing, campgrounds, bridges, and picnic areas, that prevent the free flow of the river as well as water quality protection. Boardwalks and restoration signing can be very effective in protecting meadows and other sensitive areas. Human structures in resilient locations could be maintained for use by visitors.

Provide places for people to experience the river in resilient locations, and or put in boardwalks and restoration/cultural signage to protect sensitive areas while still allowing people to experience them. Boating opportunities could still be allowed, even with preventing removal of woody debris, by designing put-in and take-out locations, educating visitors about water safety, and prohibiting boating at peak dangerous flows. Sever overcrowding of vehicles in the valley also takes away fromt eh experience so a vehicle quota system should be in place. Additional parking/shuttle services could be provided outside the part for oerflow traffic (i.e. at Devil's Postpile, Zion).

Development in the river floodplain and riparian areas is not feasible, except a few pedestrian bridges that are designed to

protect hte free flow of the river. Any development should be located in resilient locations in the river corridor. No new campgrouds shoudl be located in the Valley. Any new camping areas should be placed outside the valley as the valley as it now stands is severely overcrowded. Yosemite Village area is an appropriate area for the relocation of any employee/housekeeping housing, so that these features are concentrated and not sprawled out.

Correspondence ID: 151 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?] I support the bus, but wouldn't use it because they do not stop at climbing areas and take a long time.

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] No, reservations limit access.

[What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor?] Climbing

[How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation?] More WALK-IN campgrounds, no more permit campgrounds for vehicles.

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Increase number of walk-in camping sites in previously disturbed and other low impact areas.

Segment 2: Yosemite Valley 2.4 21E - 4 trails suggested but not blocked off, educate 2.1, 7C - Camping in previously disturbed areas, 9A - Walk in camping 2.3, 19A - WALK IN ONLY 2.2, 14A and 14B 15D 20A or 20C

Correspondence ID: 152 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,13,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Remove concessioner stock use from Park, allow NPS use.

Private floatation vessels only, swimming and water play ok

[How do we promote the river's ability to shape the landscape, reduce impediments to free flow, improve geologic/hydrologic process, restore flood-plains and meados, and protect water quality?] By engaging the public in more volunteer work Keeping camping and visitor use at current levels by any means necessary

[How do we support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced and its unique values as a place of culutrla association, education, recreation, reflection, and inspiration?] Increase education programs and partners

Mandatory public transport during peak seasons Open El Portal to private land ownership to employees

Continue use of modern rustic architecture Use or remove superintendent's house.

Correspondence ID: 153 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Segment 1: Preference - 1C, 2D , 3C, 4D, 4E, 4G, 5B Oppose - 1B, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4F, 5A, 5C

Segment 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4: Preference: 6B, 6D - Remove all large woody debris from visitor use beaches along the river, 7B, 8C, 9A, 9G - Restore upper and lower river CG, 10G, 11B, 12B, 13C, 14A, 15D, 15E, 16A, 17B, 17E - Identify additional parking on South Side Drive, 18A, 19A, 20B, 21A, 21B, 22A, 23A, 24B, 25A Oppose: 6A, 6C, 7A, 9C, 11A, 11C, 11D, 13A, 14C, 15A, 15B, 17C, 18D, 19C, 20A, 20C, 21D, 22B, 22C, 23C, 25B

Segment 4: Preference: 27C, 28B Oppose: 27A

Segment 5, 6, 7 Preference: 29C - Proximity of camp sites to the river does NOT cause trampling and riverbank erosion and relocating the site would NOT solve the problem. Trampling and riverbank erosion is caused by social trails along the edge of the river used by fishermen and visitors enjoying the ORVs of the river, 30B, 31A, 32A, 33B - Limit the expansion of Camp Wawona as water supply in inadequate. Oppose: 29A, 29B, 32B

Correspondence ID: 154 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not?] 1. Espress shuttle (employee and visitor) 2. Expanded services (41 and 120) 3. Expanded shuttles in Valley

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Remove camping from river banks, riparian habitat and floodplain. Do we need to increase camping?

[What type of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor?] 4 day limit to stay in valley

Segment 2: Yosemite Valley Shuttles from El Portal parking lot at the Trailer Village should be an alternative.

Correspondence ID: 155 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function?] Concentrate on water experience for family - swim - floate and for down stream rafting in quick water.

[How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat?] Manage by controlling river flow

[Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?] El Cap Meadow

[If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?] As a camper for years, we must move larger motor homes to a parking lot that they are used to.

[Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them?] No

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Signage

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] No

[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?] No

[What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities?] Designate areas

Segment 4 El Portal: River rafting outside of park

Segment 5, 6, 7, and 8: South Fork Merced River Wawona Bad weather huts for back packers

[How do we promote the river's ability to shape the landscapre, reduce impediments to free flow, improve geologic/hydrologic process, restore flood-plains and meadows, and protect water quality?] Dam-Clean up and some free flow.

Correspondence ID: 156 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Helicopters have short-term impact - no one complians about SAR helicopters affcting their experience, Stock have long term impact.

Seriously consider closing the Merced Lake HSC - HSCs are antiquated, their impacts on teh trails and # of hikers is high, and the price of them has narrowed their clientele to an elite few - hardly an argument for "access" vs. preservation.

[5. LYV Bacpackers' Campground] Be careful about how this is done - could afect JMT hikers or others looking to camp beyond LYV on their first night. Consider changing backcountry permit system to "zones" like Grand Canyon does, rather than trailheads.

Seasonally close concession rafting but allow people access to boat at their won risk. If worried, you could require free permits

for navigating the river so each person is aware of risks.

[8. Cultural ORV] Consultation and data collection alone are NOT ENOUGH - move infrastructure too.

Housekeeping camp could probably be re-organized to beter maximize space. Remove cabins from teh flood plain and add them to other pars of the encampment that are poorly situated, spacewise. Also, increase visitor appreciation by changing the name! [removing all lodging units at Housekeeping] would continue to put Yosemite out of reach for low-income visitors or visitors whose culture doesn't value camping.

Better to utilize two lanes, don't just give one lane to shuttle buses.

[electronic pedestrian crossing signals] this won't help control our pedestrians from mand different cultures etc. they will still walk into street and slow traffic.

[16. Leidig Medow] Don't fence bike path. Does Leidig have enough negative impact to necessitate boardwalks or fencing? Could it just be restored (removing social trails) which would promote use of already existing trails?

[17. Swinging Bridge] This area could be a beautiful recreation area if space was utilized more effectively. Getting rid of it completely would seem akin to insensitivity to diverse cultures that use the picnic area more heavily than the average white visitor.

[18. Paddling and Floating] Do not limit river access to those who pay to the concessionaire just because it would be easy to manage. This blatantly bars access to a select segment of the population.

[19. Camping Demand] Too much foot traffic to be a good campsite [east of Camp 4] [Pine and Oak] How will traffic be affected here? If there was access to this camp from teh Yose Creek Bridge area it might work. Also is this in the Yose Creek floodplain?

[21. El Cap Meadow] Don't like fencing, but I think other measures can be used to encourage staying in designated spots. Like boardwalk idea. [21D. Limit roadside parking...] Doesn't allow people to enjoy the ORV of the world's most iconic scenery. Also like the idea of making it easier for people to reach the viewing area after they step out of their car - a mini "sidewalk" or some meaningful way of walking over rather than on the edge of a busy road or in the meadow.

Yellow Pines is not always full in summer, convert into site-by-site camping, give VIP program "dibs" first then let others fill in the rest of the spots.

ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESORUCE VALUES: Keep heavy development away from river edges. Rain catchment Water quotas and penalties for household use better monitoring of construction/contractors More compehensive look at run-off Education the public about climate change! the Sierra's biggest threat to water) Reduce/remove stock use

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIRECT CONNECTIONS TO RIVER VALUES: Monitor and document what we have Move develope trails/infrastrucutre away from them as much as possible. Make sure backcountry permit holders are educated about LNT, as pertains to arch. resources Delineate the way we want them to use it through fencing, clear access points, etc.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM: [parking] Better delineated and expanded at Camp 6 El Portal (+ a shuttle) - trailer court or intersection of 140 and EP Road One of the Proposed campsite areas (Pine and Oak? Eagle Creek?) [bus services] Yes! Get people out of cars and into buses, ala Zion or Denali or Devil's Postpile. I would use it. [remote parking and shuttle service] Yes. This would do a great deal for visitor experience - less congestion, smog, traffic, more emergency services. Those with lodging could drive in, but could have assigne dparking spot and tha twould be theirs for the week. Require people to leave their car. [day use reservations] No. This would unecessarily bar people from coming. If you move to bar day use access, there would have to be enough infrastructure of parking and buses to accommodate. If couldn't, first-come/first-served would be better than reservations.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS: [current mix of day use and overnight visitation] Keep prices low for camping and keep a mix of types of overnight accommodation. Need ot make serious alternatios to either traffic patters or #s allowed in park on summer weekends/other busy times. [camping] Clearly defined access - signs probaby are not enough. Fences probably needed where campgrounds are near the river. When picking new sites for camping, consider many factors - impacts on habitat, traffic, access, etc. [efficiency of administrative land use] Many DNC employees dont need housing/offices in Yosemite Valley, such as upper management. The mall is big and paved - if more buildings are needed, build there. [operational needs] I like that administrative positions are moving out of Yosemite/El Portal to Mariposa. The "urban footprint" that buildings have now shouldn't be increased, and some buildings can probably be removed, like the old wellness center at the trianwreck or the amphitheater at Lower River.

Traffic Systems Consder seriously the "shuttle in" option for all day users. Visitor numbers are very likely to continue to grow, and if even more accommodations are added, visitor numbers will probably outpace them, meaning higher still numbers of day

use, aka cars. Get creative with shuttle points. YARTS is not very effective as a voluntary system. If Denali, Zion and Devil's Postpile can do a shuttle system, Yosemite should be able to, too.

Availability of Camping and other Low Cost Accommodations Price control the concessionaire more effectively Offer new campgrounds. Of the ones presented in this book, I prefer the PIne and Oak, Upper PInes walk in, and Taft Toe

Housing for Park and Park Partner and Concessionaire Employees! The housing situation, especially for year-round and permanent full-time employees is unacceptable! Countless co-workers and friends have had to move multiple times per year, living in trucks, garages, and dismal subleasing arrangements, or commuting over ad hour to and from work. The NPS needs to take action in this regard, not continue to ignore it. This can be ameliorated by A) Removing non-essential (aka upper management) DNC empolyees from Valley housing, B) actively enforcing that El Portal residents really do work full-time in the park, C) creating more housing in El Portal, D) moving some functions (and their employee's housing) to Mariposa or Groveland.

Loss of "Wilderness" character due to overcrowding Move to a "zone" permitting system liek the Grand Canyon does for this part of the park to ensure equity for Half Dome, HSC users, JMT hikers, and others

High Impact by Stock and Useres of Merced Lake HSC Remove HSC or significantly change its impacts by limiting number of beds and backcountry campsites, servicing by helicopter, and including HSC hikers in wilderness permits

ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES: Move and remove bridges Let nature prevail - meadows should succeed into forests. Use selective thinnign for viewscapes, but don't impede on the ecosystems natural rhythms. Make access points and regulations (or desired behaviors) clear and easily followable.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIRECT CONNECTIONS TO RIVER VALUES: Continue to offer varied recreation options just make access points or regulations more clear for visitors whether by using barriers, education, new parking lots, or more defined trails. Continue to keep use centered on east end of valley so quieter spots still remain on west end

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM Keep use concentrated, esp. in wilderness Reduce admin functions in valley Figure out a comprehensive traffic plan for whole valley Consider better education of park visitors as they enter the park about basic LNT principles

LAND USE AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS Housing for essential employees (law enforcement, medica, late shifts) Visitor Center, new cultural center for indigenous peoples Some new campgrounds out of floodplain I support removing substandard housing, such as the trainwreck or Ansel Adams Gallery Apartments, the Superintendents' House, and Lower River Amphitheater I also support keeping the amount of asphalt to a minimum - no new paving of the trails (like the recent northside trial renovation) or roadside pullouts.

YOUR VISION Concentrate heavy use to specific areas Use barriers, education, trails, to keep that heavy use in specific places Keep other areas free of development like west end of Yosemite Valley, so that those who seek quiet can find it Use more education upon entrance and arrival to minimize individual impacts

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Correspondence ID: 157 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES: Rehabilitate the worse off areasto more natural conditions - Fence off to eliminate use while recovering Do not all people into these areas Restrict and monitor use in appropriate areas [prioritize] Those with the greatest biological diversity or that have been abused the most, river, streambank, meadows Reuse water when appropriate Remove the golf course - so ridiculous to have one in Yosemite Restore woody material and river in areas that it has become entrenched due to roads Limit use to areas where appropriate and restrict amount of use to protect river The NF is right next door, not the only river to swim in

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIRECT CONNECTIONS TO RIVER VALUES Not everyone needs to go to the river in Yosemite Designate use areas and limit use, more monitoring From a bridge or nice landing with a view of the river A nice picnic where you can hear the river Not everybody needs to swim in it!

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM No more parking! More buses into the Valley, or stop letting people in when it's full It's a hassle to drive and park in the Valley. I would use the bus when available Remote parking from outside the Valley would be great. [day use reservations]Yes, if there are shuttles [day use parking/vehicle permit] more shuttles [appropriate recreation in the river corridor] I don't think it's appropriate in the Valley, It's ok to restrict some use You have to limit use, both wehre and how much to protect hte river resources and enjoyment of these Nobody likes a crowded river

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS More shuttles, have different parking areas for each More camping outside Valley, Don't put more sites near river! Need to monitor and restrict use when capacity is met Keep people out of the sensitive areas. Yosemite is still pretty from a trail. No development is appropriate in the river corridor any developmet that is

there is not adding to the protection and enhancement of the river

YOUR VISION Resource protection, limit use in areas that are being damaged.

Correspondence ID: 158 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Protect the natural resources and man-made historical resources

Encourage overnight use, discourage day use Raise entry fees! Limit tour buses

Keep fly fishing as a sport Encourage catch and release

More overnight lidging Keep the high sierra camps provide bike paths on all roads

Keep the same Preserve historical and natural beauty Encourage recreation and enjoyment

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Correspondence ID: 159 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Mirror Lake was left to nature - will the lazy... of hte Merced be left also? If not clear the ...

Solitude would be a hrd thing to accomplish in Yosemite. Re: Horse manure/use how much is used for support/transportation to an dfrom HIgh Sierra Camps. We suggest closing or reducing the Merced L H. Sierra Camp and supply only coed...

No permit for cars but do a 1st come 1st served...

Cars should circumnavigate the parking lot rather than go through the intersection. service trucks/garage/shuttle bus parking should be on the perimeter of the park, not in strategic parking behind the store.

Relocate employees to a nearby town use their living facilities for visitors to the park or raze buildings for more parking.

Correspondence ID: 160 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent:

I attended the MRP workshop on October 28, 2011 in Wawona. We are all appreciative of your having an excellent workshop there. Thank you. I have a few alternative comments that I prefer to present in this narrative form.

By background, I have been visiting Yosemite since, probably, age 5. Summers of 1951-1956 were spend working the Valley, mainly at the former Camp Curry Dining Room. My free time was spent hiking or climbing throughout the Park. In 1968, we purchased a lot in Section 35, Wawona, and built a vacation cabin, which we still own and rent through The Redwoods.

Under Cultural ORVs for Wawona (pgs 5-6 in workbook), you list Indian settlements and Camp A.E. Wood, which are certainly significant. But you also stress that, at one point, there were Black soldiers stationed there. What unique, significant artifacts did they create or leave, that they should be singled out? Missing from Wawona Cultural ORVs is the Wawona Hotel, Stella Lake (the source of summer ice for the hotel), and (?) the only golf course within a National Park.

Cultural ORVs for Yosemite Valley (Segment 2) could include: The Ledge Trail from Camp Curry to Glacier Point, B. the Mist Trail, C. the Toboggan Run west of Camp Curry, D. Camp Curry parking lot skating rink, E. Valley Chapel, F. Church Ampitheater, G. Many remarkable and well-preserved hiking trails built during the Great Depression by the CCC and others.

Traffic circulation. In our group we discussed the blunder of the NPS, deciding that, in orer to decrease cars in the valley, three gas stations were removed and, at least, 1000 parking spaces were eliminated, without any plans, but wishful thinking, to replace the cars with another form of transportation. I have seen parking eliminated from: Happy Isles (?100 sps.), Mirror Lake - 25, Indian Caves - 15, Lower Yosemite Falls - 30, Government Center - 100, Yosemite Lodge - ?100 taken to site temporary buildings, etc, etc. Time wasted looking for a place to park increases congestion and auto pollution. Remediation of this problem should be considered.

I wish the group well on this, your fourth effort to get the MRP passed.

Correspondence ID: 161 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Segment 1: Merced River Above Nevada Fall 1B 2D - educate hikers that stock have right of way 3C 4D 5B

Segment 2: Yosemite Valley 6B 7B 8A 9A 10D 11B 12B 13B 14B 15F - Create more parking 16A 17A 18A 19A 20B 21A 23A

Segment 5, 6, 7, and 8: South Fork Merced River Wawona 29B 30A 31A 32A 33A

Correspondence ID: 162 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,01,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [How can we protect and restore free-flowing condition and hydrologic function?] Keep permanent developments out of the floodplain. Remove or alter some bridges.

[How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat?] Replace meadow trails with boardwalks. Allow access to river only at designated places.

[Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?] East Yosemite Valley and El Cap Meadow

[What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources?] Steer people away from sensitive sites. Educated public at visitor centers.

[If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate?] 1,622 day use spaces at Taft Toe. (Leave day use parking at Camp 6 to supplement, for now.) This may need to be developed in increments, as funds allow. Some engineering data may have been developed during the Yosemite Valley Plan effort, and would be found under Alternative #3. This should be coupled with an information center and rest rooms, at Taft Toe. A transit center, adjacent to the info center, could accomodate both shuttle busses to the East Valley, and or DWN interpretive busses. The info center could provide visitors with current data on happenings in the East Valley, including current population concentrations at key locations. Staff could make suggestions of the various alternative recreational activities, and issue permits if necessary. Staff could offer the possibility of visitors driving to the Camp 6 parking area, and riding the shuttle bus through the East Valley. Or, they (visitors) could drive their own vehicles on the East Valley Loop Road (South Side Drive to Sentinel Bridge, and return via North Side Drive to Pohono Bridge, or El Cap Crossover), on a short sight seeing venture. Studies may have been done on the feasibility of using El Cap Crossover as either a one way, or two way road. People who already have reservations for camping and/or lodging could be allowed to proceed to their destinations, with guidance. If lodging or camping space is still available, they could be advised of such, and reservations made. Parking spaces should be developed for RVs and busses. Rvs not spending the night could be encouraged to stay parked, and ride a bus to the East Valley. The possibility of overnight RV sites might be considered, if development space is available. Consult engineering studies!

[Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?] No, this was tried at Bryce Canyon and it was a dismal failure, for day us visitors. Park employees and/or DWN employees might be another story.

[Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not?] See above. Out of Valley camping might be an exception. Also, shuttles to Glacier Point and Tioga Road might be a good idea.

[How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation?] By the use of the info center at Taft Toe, and smaller info centers at Gateway Communities.

[How can we increase the availability of cmaping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Allow "Walk-in" tent camping at "river's edge" sites (with NO permanent development). Encourage RVs to camp at out of Valley site (and develop new sites).

[What type of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor?] Oritentation is primary! The Park's website should start the orientation effort, followed by Gateway Community Visitor Centers, Park Entrance station, and finally the Taft Toe info center. A menu of options should be made available, at each. Rest room facilities are next in line, for priority. A thrid priority should be picnic facilities. It goes without saying, that parking and traffic circulation, is important.

My top segment management options: East and West Yosemite Valleys, tied together at Taft Toe.

Correspondence ID: 163 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,01,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Segment 1: 1A -Yes (hikers have other options if quotas are full) 1B - Yes, but do not let commercial users dominate the quota 2C - Yes (2B -NO! Helicopter noise is worse than manure) 3A and 3C - Yes (eleminate dispersed camping here - those who want it can campt at other lakes) 4A and 4B - Yes (option 4F would suit me best, but would make more trouble for the NPS, I suspect) 5A and 5B - Yes

Segment 2: 6A and 6C - Yes 7A - Yes 7B - NO! - no camping in riparian zones - replace lost camp sites elsewhere (see 9A and others) 9A and 9B - Yes, see my other responses also 10C - Is the best choice 11D - Best - do not have this kind of housing in Yosemite (11C is the next best choice) 12A - Is my choice, see my general camping comments 14A and 14B - Yes, see my general camping comments 15F - Can B, C, D, and E all be combined? Doubt any one of them alone will solve this problem nor will round about work as may be hoped. 16A - Is best 17C - Is best, as existing area is too small for crowds 18C - Is best, see my general comments on Valley West End 19B - Best - See my general comment 20A - Seems best choice 21A, 21C, 21D - I suggest doing all of these 22B - Seems best 23D - None of the above options - See my general camping comments and specific suggestions (Certainly NOT any of the sites listed in option 23A) 24A and 25C - These seem best

Segment 4: No comments here - insufficient experience in this area

Segement 5, 6, 7, and 8: No comments here - insufficient experience in this area

[How do we manage visitor use in a way that balance opportunities for high quality, resource-related experiences in the river corridor with the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural river values today and into the future?] To meet public demand for more camping, re-open one or both of the former river campgrounds, but keep designated sites away from the riparian zones. (How often will we have "100-year floods" here in view of decreased Sierra snowpacks due to climate changes?) Other options shown on your maps include Upper Pines and Lower Pines expansions (OK by me) and two near Yosemite Lodge (less OK by me). Any new campsites west of The Lodge should not be considered. (See below)

[What structures and development are appropriate in the river corridor and support the protection and enhancement of river values?] The east half of the Valley is already urbanized, hotels, stores, restaurants, campgrounds, roads, parking lots, noise, and other non-natural "river values". Please do not allow this urban sprawl to spread to the still natural river corridor in the west half of the Valley. Public desire for additional campsites can be met elsewhere (see above). Do not expand river rafting to west of Pohono Bridge. Those who want more rafting have the Merced below El Portal open to them.

Correspondence ID: 164 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: [How can we protect and restore free flowing conditions and hydrologic function?] Remove the Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee bridges. Remove river debris only when it presents a hazar to bridge(s) structure.

[How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat?] With a combination of creating a "carring capacity" for any givenarea, and naturalizing "social trails" while creating boardwalks for river access.

[Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?] Leidig Meadow and El Capitan Meadow and Ahwahnee meadow.

[What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality?] Maintain existing practice assuming a reduced demand by managing and over all carrying capacity that alleviates water demand.

[If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and which locations would be appropriate?] Assuming an increase, all additional parking considering the present excessive summertime and Holiday conditions in the Valley, all expanded parking should be outside Yosemite Valley, Wawona, Glacier Point, or East of Crane Flat on Hwy 120. Hotel, campers and wilderness travelers with reservations should have designated parking.

[Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not?] Yes, I would use them if they were my only access.

[If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate?] 80%-90% should be on reservation depending conditions and time of year. 10-20% might be available as first come at gates.

[Would you support the use of a day use parking/vehicle permit?] I support day permits.

[What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities?]

Swimming, fishing, bird watching, and rafting. A permit system which does not overload the experience.

[How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected?] Create 2 multi-story parking garages (2 or 3 stories with appropriate size). This would/could return Camp 6 parking to natural riparian condition while opening areas like wilderness parking to additional camping potential.

[What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor?] Shuttle bus access and sufficient policing.

[How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met?] Adequately educate people at the gate upon entering. Use additional volunteers to assist with monitoring priorities.

Segment 1: 4B - Maintain food service to hikers (No hot food) 5A - reduce quotas 40%

Segment 2:

2.1- 6A - Protect riparian habitat. Remove debris when it becomes a threat to bridges, structurally 7C - Relocate all campsites within 100 ft of the river/high water mark 9D - Because "public opinion" desires an increase in camp sites the notion of a reduced carring capacity for overnight use requires a concurrent reduction of hotel beds, which I favor.

[How do we promote the river's ability to shape the landscape, reduce impediments to free flow, improve geologic/hydrologic process, restore flood plains and meadows and protect water quality?] Remove Sugar Pine and Ahwahnee bridges.

2.2- 12D - Restore with picnic area only. Park at Curry Village 14A - Restore camping to the limits determined in the 1980 Master Plan 15F - Install a multi-story (2 or 3 stories) parking garage to restore resources (like Camp 6) from asphalt etc. The garage would also reduce parking lot snow removal in Winter.

2.3- 16C - It becomes difficult to appropriate action in protecting these meadows without a knowledge of its carring capacity. Assuming the status quo, option 16A appears to have the best protection. Signs would also be helpful. 17C - Develop a central parking location. Requiring the use of the shuttle system with a corresponding one-way travel system for private vehicles. Reducing traffic flow. Centralized parking may in fact have 2 or 3 locations (Yosemite Lodge, Curry Village, Ahwahnee) 17E - Centralized parking and the use of the shuttle bus is an approach to reducing transportation congestion, noise pollution, and increase the serene appreciation of the Merced River and it's surroundings. 20D - Refer to my comments above to 17C and 17E

2.4- 21E - Viewing platforms may help. The area here should need regular policing or no parking. 22D - This area is best left as is 23B - Additional camping may include the wilderness parking area if the centralized parking suggested above were implemented. 24C - Limit the number of picnic tables to a special integrity (i.e. equivelant to a camp site for 6 people)

Segment 4: 28C - This area may also be considered as a permanent staging area for a park shuttle system, for YARTS or other.

Correspondence ID: 165 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,27,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Stop all stock use, use helicopter for re-supply of camp or close camp

remove [Wawona] impoundment Stop locals from using swinging bridge area as an area to let their dogs run and swim off leash stop houses from being build and expanded near flat rock area

[Land Uses and Associated Developments] as little and few structures as possible

[Opportunities for Direct Connections to River Values] stop letting new houses from being built or existing ones from being expanded that are within 200 yards of river Wawona flat rock area has been diminished by construction there in past 2 years Wawona area, purchase easements through lots near river because in the last couple of years lots there have been building fences to block people from getting to the river.

Correspondence ID: 166 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: US Congress Federal Government
Received: Dec,22,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Please find within this letter my comments regarding the Merced River plannign process. AS you are aware, Yosemite National Park is located within the district that I represent in the House of Representatives. As such, it is my responsibility to relay issues that are of importance to the residents of the communities within my district.

I understand the difficult task of balancing the uses of the park; however, given that so much of Yosemite is wilderness and basically "off-limits" to many visitors, I would encourage that visitor access, without unnecessary restrictions, be provided to as much of the park as possible. This includes addressing the issues surrounding the steady removal of parking availability to visitors. The continued removal of parking spaces inherently restricts access to the park for families that have planned a trip to the park for a day or to camp.

Yosemite Valley is seven square miles in a 1200 square mile National Park. I strongly suggest that the focus be on visitor management and not stray toward visitor exclusion. Eighteen thousand properly managed visitors can leave the area "unimpaired for future generations" as is directed in the NPS organic legislation.

It has been brought to my attention on multiple occasions that there has not been a sufficient efort by the National Park Service (NPS) to restore damaged campgrounds and parking areas after the 1997 flood. As the Merced River Plan aims to reduce traffic congestion, I would suggest that a focused effort on the restoration of campsites and parking areas would alleviate some concerns. Another issue presented to me is that the NPS has not followed through with the plan to loop Yosemite Valley's only exit road around the Yosemite Lodge, which has been promised to eliminate the single biggest constriction on vehicle travel in the Valley and the genesis of traffic congestion. It seems untenable to consider dramatic restrictions on visitor access when identified managmeent solutions are not being implemented.

A traffic plan may be necessary to consider in conjunction with the Merced River Plan as it could prove useful in addressing the challenges that the park faces. Through a traffic plan, Yosemite could solicit input from local communities, annual visitors, and interested groups to ensure that there is no unnecessary reduction in access to all forms of traffic that the park encounters on a daily basis.

Thank you for your consideration fo these comment. I hope they will be carefully regarded in development of the Merced River Plan and help minimize its impact on access to Yosemite National Park.

Sincerely,

JEFF DENHAM United States Representative

Correspondence ID: 167 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc. Business
Received: Dec,14,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Mr. Neubacher:

Attached is a completed Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook, Fall 2011.

In reading the workbook, some thoughts and comments came to mind which are intended to support the NPS in its MRP planning effort. I have attempted to consolidate these comments into logical groupings and would welcome the chance to disucss these issues more completely if you believe it warranted. Additional comments are included in the workbook.

--Frames of reference

>1980 GMP For one of the options presented (removal of Housekeeping Camp units), the 1980 GMP was used to provide additional information that might be useful in considering a reduction. However, when the number of campsites in Yosemite Valley was discussed, the number of campsites called for in the 1980 GMP was not indicated.

On an overall basis, there are fewer campsites and fewer overnight accomodations in Yosemite Valley than are called for in the 1980 GMP. Further, the information presented for Housekeeping Camp is not correct in that while the GMP did call for the removal of 68 units, 34 have already been removed since the 1980 GMP, so the removal of 68 units indentified as an option in 11(c), is not correct.

>Other Wild and Scenic River Plans There are many nuances to be considered in coming up with a management plan for the river and perhaps it would be helpful to illustrate how similar issues have been resolved on other sections of the Merced River or in plans for other Wild and Scenic Rivers. An example might be consideration of the removal of the Sugar Pine Bridge in 10(b) in relation to its inhibition of the free flowing condition of the river and the localized impacts to hydrologic function.

One would believe that there are numberous sections of the Merced River outside Yosemite Valley where free flowing conditions and/or hydrologic function are inhibited due to structures such as rip-rap along the river's edge or bridge foundations and abutments. If not there, are there other rivers with similar situations where we might gather learning as to the range of options and the agreed solution? It was my understanding the the term, "Free-flowing" in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act referred to the presence of dams, weirs, and other similar impediments to "free-flow" of a river, not to such adjacent structures

as bridges and rip-rap, particularly in recreational segments of the river, as in this case.

>Other legislation Yosemite is protected through a number of acts and laws (Wilderness Act, the 1890 Act establishing Yosemite as a national park, the 1916 Act establishing the National Park Service and the 1978 Redwood Act amendments, for example) and it might be helpful to understand if there is a hierarchy to how the laws relate to Yosemite. For instance, how does the Wilderness Act and land under that designation relate to lands also indenified under Wild and Scenic status?

What role does public safety or ADA play in considering infrastructure? One would certainly imagine that there is infrastructure that would be appropriate along the Merced River beyond only that which is necessary to support the protection and enhancement of river values, which is the inference from the working on page 2.

>Condition of the river The goal of the management plan for the RIver is to protect and enhance the various ORV's for the River. According to the Merced Wild and Scenic River Values Draft Baseline Conditions report, the current condition of ORVs is similiar or better as compared to the 1987 designation. In this report, the improved and/or similar conditions are credited to NPS resource management actions. If the River's ORVs have been improved since its designation, is that useful information in relation to the plan under development? For instance water quality is noted as being excellent. What are the mangement practices that have contributed to this result? With the call to enhance ORVs, consider continuation of current management practices that habve been producing these results over the last twenty years.

--Descriptive language and adjectives

Various adjectives are used in the document that do not appear to have a scientific basis and are inconsistent with the tone of scientific language that predominates. Terms such as "exquisite" and "incomparable" are used in the same paragraph with modifiers such as "glacially carved or "alpine". A more consistent tone would be helpful in deciding among plan options.

There are other statements that might be reconsidered to enhance understanding of impacts. To again use the Sugar Pine Bridge as an example, the planning workbook notes that the bridge "severely" impacts the free-flowing condition of the Merced River. As a frame of reference for the enabling legislation, page 4 of the planning workbook notes that the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was in response to the nation's rivers being "dredged, dammed, diverted and degraded." It would appear that the relative impact of a bridge abutment that was in plce when the Merced River was designated would not be considered "severe" in relation to the impacts referenced in the legislative record.

Several times the workbook refers to "high quality" resource related experiences. This description leaves it to the reader to interpret what those experiences might be, which may be entirely different from the planners' perspective. A list of activities that do and do not fit these criteria would be helpful. Perhaps "appropriate" or "inappropriate" would be better descriptors, along with a list of prohibited and allowed activities.

--Consideration of options

In identifying various options, the degree of impact is not always defined in the same context. For instance, the discussion under item 15 includes consideration of "relocation" for some of the options and under 15 (a) calls for "moving" Concession Headquarters. Item 15 addresses traffic congestion at Camp 6. Inconsitent application of impacts ("relocation" versus "moving") may create confusion in that a person may like or dislike the impact and make a judgement about a solution on that basis. "Relocation" may be in or out of the river corridor, the same as "moving", but the inference to the reader might be different.

While the workbook points out that there is cause and effect impact from the various options, perhaps stronger examples can be used to illustrate that conundrum. For instance, there is discussion as to the perceived negative impact of commercial boating activity, but little discussion of its benefit. Commercial boating provides for safety instruction and safety equipment, interpretive orientation to Yosemite and the river experience, staff along the river at locations to promote safe behavior, resource instruction as to appropriate locations to go to shore during the river experience, localized impacts at put-in and take-out, systems to minimize traffic impacts by consolidating use on shuttle busses and equipment to return commercial rafts and limits on the number of boats on the river at any time. Use of commercial services for rafting in the recreational areas in lower stretches of the Merced outside Yosemite could be referenced, as an example, to compare or contrast with the proposals under consideration. Without a more comprehensive description of these issues, it is not reasonable to believe that the public will be able to make informed choices among the various options.

Some of the issues are not completely framed to allow for full consideration of cause and effect. For instance, page 10 discusses how the mix of day use and overnight use has changed since the 1980 GMP and has information about the number of people spending the night in Yosemite Valley in various types of accomodations, particularly referencing a reduction in the number of campsites. Not mentioned in this section is that the GMP called for a reduction in the number of day use parking spaces (which was accomplished) nor that the number of other overnight accomodations has also been significantly reduced since the 1980 GMP. The GMP called for a total reduction of 268 overnight units (camsites and "hotel" units) in Yosemite Valley. Since that time, the number of overnight units has been reduced by more than 780, a combination of guest rooms (414) and campsites (369), both in excess of the reductions called for in the GMP. Further, based on my understanding of the park's visitor accomodations, I do not believe the presented on page 10 in relation to overnight use is correct. I believe the actual number of overnight use is closer to 5,500 rather than the 7,800 noted in the workbook.

The National Park Service faces a very difficult task in completing the palnning process and in implementing a plan for management of the Merced River. I know that opportunities for public input and comment will continue to be part of the MRP process and I hope that as additional planning materials become available, NPS can continue to enhance public understanding of the significant issues that must be considered. DNC appreciates the opportunity to provided public comment on this impotant planning effort.

Yours truly, Dan Jensen President DNC Parks and Resorts at Yosemite, Inc.

Correspondence ID: 168 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Park Superintendent Yosemite National Park Attn: Merced River Plan P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389 Dear Superintendent, We are now on Plan #3 and $50 million so far. The planning process has gone from difficult to ridiculous. It is unfortunate that the Wild and Scenic designation of the Merced River is now governing how the heart of the park is managed. The Merced River is a nice piece of the park, but it's NOT why 3 million people go to Yosemite National Park from all over the world each year. I pity your situation and wish you the best. Please work to let common sense prevail to the greatest extent possible. My philosophy is simple and overarching ? the river is fine, focus on real problems like parking, lost camping sites, and upgrading. SEGMENT 1: The current system is not a problem. Leave the High Sierra Camp, the backpackers camps, and the entire system alone. LYV is crowded, but everyone knows that and it actually provides comfort for new backpackers. The composting toilet is a great facility - it would be a tragedy to see that removed. SEGMENT 2: Rebuild the campgrounds destroyed in the 1997 floods and improve the existing bathrooms at all the camps. Move some of the sites away from the river to compromise. Car access in the valley is a big problem at peak season. Increase parking where its practical and include bear boxes at all locations. Provide a large parking lot and VOLUNTARY shuttle service from outside the valley. Let people know if the valley lots are full by using large signs with real-time information. DURING PEAK SEAONS WHEN THE VALLEY LOTS ARE EXPECTED TO FILL, Charge for parking inside the valley, but only DURING PEAK SEASON WHEN THE VALLEY LOTS ARE EXPECTED TO FILL. By warning people the valley lots are full, and by charging them to park during these impacted times, it will create an incentive to use the VOLUNTARY shuttle service. Let people drive in to the valley, drop off the family and bikes, and then have a driver go back and park outside the park. Do not make people load their bikes, coolers or gear onto a shuttle outside the park. A trailer bike rack pulled by the shuttle would still be a great idea, but give people options and incentivize VOLUNTARY shuttle use. Upgrade facilities, don't remove them. Relocate away from obvious rockfall areas such as some of the tent cabins at Curry Village. Remove woody debris wherever necessary for flood control as well as boating. ALL OTHER SEGMENTS: No comment. [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 169 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Yosemite:

As a long time visitor to Yosemite NP, I am writing specifically about horse use in the park. Horses impacts the trails, are a source of weed invasion and pollution. I am urging that you remove the High Sierra Camps at Vogelsand, May Lake, Sunirve and Merced Lake. These are inappropriate in the Yosemite backcountry and require numerous horse trips to supply them.

I also would encourage you to remove the horse stables from the Yosemite Valley as was promised in previous plans. Without going into details, each horse on a trail is equal to dozens of hikers. Given that the majority of park users prefer walking and that horses created a disproportionate impact on park resources and park visitors, I think it's time to remove the commercial operations from the park.

Sincerely:

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 170 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Superintendant

Please accept my respectful comments on the Merced River Planning Workbook. I have reviewed the workbook and while I am not able to complete all the pages I would like to register my concern in a few areas.

I have backpacked in the Sierra at least twice a year every year for the last 40 years. I completed the southern half of the JMT this year and was resupplied by a packer so I am not a knee jerk anti horse person. As a UC extension staff I work with Ranchers and farmers throughout the west and understand their needs and rights. However the impact of stock and the high camps downstream impact needs to be addressed.

The commercial stables in the Valley are not in the interest of the public and server to degrade our national treasure. Their

impact on the resource is not worth the benefits to a small number of people. I recommend their removal.

As a teenager I followed my parents around the high camp loop. They stayed in the tents and we slept outside on the ground. It was grand, but that was also an era of nightly fire falls off glacier point! The time of the high camps, like the fire falls, is past their impact is too great. The stock needed to supply them degrades the experience of the large numbers of hikers who have a right to enjoy the experience without breathing flies and stepping in manure.

Thanks for your good work

Correspondence ID: 171 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Sirs, I am commenting on the Merced River Planning Workbook In my 52 years of experiencing Yosemite N.P. I have seen the degradation of the water quality of the Merced, and Tuolumne Rivers by horses and packstock first hand. I have climbed all of the summits in the park and witnessed destruction and polluting of the Yosemite environment by packstock and horses many times. Please include the provisions provided in the Merced River Plan. It removes the commercial stables from Yosemite Valley, the commercial High Sierra Camps, and the trails invovled . Thank You. Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 172 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: No stock animals in park

Correspondence ID: 173 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Yosemite NP is a national treasure. I would like the Park's stewards to act in the Park's best interests. The stables, a source of pollution and trail destruction, should be removed from the Valley. My first hiking experience was with the High Sierra camps many years ago. I loved the experience. If there septic systems are inadequate they should be closed and upgraded. I would much prefer resupply be done by helicopter rather than mule train. Look at the hut system in Europe, no mules destroying their trails. I abhor meeting mule trains on the trails. They represent destroyed trails, dust and manure to me. The invasive weeds and pollution are less visible "benefits" of mules. Please take good care of my Park.

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 174 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hi: I am an avid backpacker and have been for the last 40 years. I have seen (and walked in) the mess left behind by packers. I have also seen the sad state of some of the trails, waters and high meadows trampled and despoiled by livestock. I strongly support that the Park Service include provisions in the new Merced River Plan that require the timely removal of the commercial stables from Yosemite Valley, and the timely removal of the commercial High Sierra Camps at Merced Lake, Vogelsang, May Lake, and Sunrise. Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 175 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: There should be a clear and mandatory requirement for NPS to remove the commercial horse stables from Yosemite Valley. This was in a prior plan for Yosemite Valley, but never done. Otherwise, the Valley's trails will continue to suffer under the hooves of commercial horses, simply so private companies can profit from tourists at the expense of nature and most trail users who travel on foot. Second, the commercial High Sierra Camps (HSCs) are responsible for polluting the Merced River and seriously degrading trails throughout the Yosemite high country. The HSC's provide luxury accommodations in remote wilderness settings (i.e., soft bedding, fancy meals, showers, etc.), and all of the camps' supplies must be packed in via horses and mules. The frequent mule-trains needed to supply the camps result in dusty, eroded trails covered with manure, urine and flies, which must be endured by all wilderness visitors including families and children, not just the clients of the camps themselves. Further, all of the wastewater produced by the camps ends up polluting Yosemite's soils, waters, and wetlands. More than 25 years ago, Congress expressed concern about the impacts at the HSCs, and authorized the NPS to remove the camps. But NPS has not done so, largely due to pressure from vocal camp clientele and the commercial outfits that run the camps.

Correspondence ID: 176 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: Dear sirs: I am commenting on the Merced River Planning Workbook. I did a hike up the Hetch Hetchy drainage a couple of years ago. It was a wonderful backpack until we hit the horses at the high camp. Phew! And the flys! Rutted trails. Stock animals negatively affect my hiking experience. Didn't like walking in horse feces and urine. I even saw a horse take a leak in the stream, that I had taken drinking water from. Disgusting. Soil and Water pollution from stock animals is also a major concern. Horses and people are not compatible. The High Sierra Camp is a private business and has no place in a wilderness area. It degrades my experience of the wilderness. Wilderness to me means no facilities. Please include provisions in the new Merced River Plan that require the timely removal of the commercial stables from Yosemite Valley, and the timely removal of the commercial High Sierra Camps at Merced Lake, Vogelsang, May Lake, and Sunrise.

Thanks May all beings be with peace, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 177 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To Whom it May Concern:

As someone who has hiked in Yosemite since childhood and who continues to do so at age 66, I would like to comment on the proposed Merced River Plan. The time to remove the commercial stables in the valley and the High Sierra Camps in the rest of the park is long overdue. I say this as someone who stayed in the camps as a child and enjoyed them immensely. There are now so many more people in Yosemite whose activities negatively impact the environment and the quality of the hiking experience for everyone that I believe these commercial operations should be ended. The supplies needed in the camps put too much of a burden on the trails and the wastes produced have a destructive impact on a place that I love above all others. Please honor the agreement to end these activities that was in the original Yosemite Valley plan.

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 178 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Keep Merced lake high sierra camp as it is so that people can continue to enjoy the river and the wilderness of Yosemite. Reducing or restricting the camp would reduce the the number of people experiencing the backcountry. When Stephen Mather created the NPS and the high sierra camps almost one hundred years ago, he knew that the backcountry has to accomodate more than just the elite backpackers. That is still true today.

Keep Merced Lake camp as it is.

Correspondence ID: 179 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher,

Congratulations on the Merced River Planning Workbook which not only informs the public of the many challenges and opportunities for a viable Yosemite National Park and the Merced River, but also invites the public's input to the Workbook.

A bit of personal background: my husband, three children and their friends, and I have been avid backpackers in the High Sierra since 1973. Being relatively recent immigrants from Europe (France and Norway), we have found an incredible treasure in the Sierra. These mountains have helped us find a well needed balance in our hectic lives.

We have also enjoyed the Yosemite Park itself in all seasons, even in the Winter as we're members of the Yosemite Cross Country Skiing Club.

We have a preference for cross-country hiking as leaving the trail only a few hundred yards transports us to pristine areas where no human imprint can be felt. And we make sure that those coming after us will have the same experience by leaving no trace.

With our backpack and hiking experience in this area we are deeply concerned about the commercial High Sierra Camps at Vogelsang, Sunrise, May Lake and Merced Lake. They have NO place in this beautiful landscape. No commercial outfit should benefit from the beauty that belongs to us all.

The same goes for the commercial stables in Yosemite Valley. It is my understanding that a prior Plan had included its closure. Stock animals negatively affect the hikers' experience and damage the fragile ecosystem of the park. We have often seen damaged trails by horse hooves on both trails and in fragile meadows.

We're also concerned about the water pollution from both of these commercial outfits, and highly recommend they both be

closed.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 180 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Tehipite Chapter Yosemite Committee, Sierra Club Conservation/Preservation
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Tehipite Chapter Yosemite Committee, Sierra Club c/o George Whitmore P.O. Box 5572 Fresno, CA 93755

14 December 2011

Superintendent Yosemite National Park Attn: Merced River Plan Alternatives P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

This is being emailed to yose_planning@nps.gov

Sir:

This is being sent on behalf of the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club. The Tehipite Chapter encompasses several counties in Central California, including all of Yosemite National Park.

This is in response to your request for comments on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Alternatives Planning Workbook, dated Fall 2011.

The Workbook is an impressive publication, reflecting the immense investment of thought, energy, and time which went into producing it. We do feel, however, that the Workbook's usefulness is limited because certain basic foundational elements are lacking. Among these are information on user capacity, transportation, and parking. When this MRP process was started we were told that a park-wide transportation plan would be an integral part of it, because you can't deal with capacity without talking about transportation. But, for whatever reason, transportation kept getting downplayed. It is to the point now that it is basically off the table, which leaves the Workbook irrelevant.

Consideration of user capacity, transportation, and parking are matters which should have been an integral part of the process of formulating "potential management options". Instead, there seems to be an assumption that there will always be room for more people and more vehicles, and all that is needed is to figure out how to manage them. This is especially noticeable in discussion of the Visitor Use Management Program on page nine.

It is also noticeable in the way in which the demand for more camping is addressed. At various points in the Workbook it is stated that there has been a significant demand for more camping, and the NPS response appears to be that they must therefore provide more camping. In fact, at the Wawona workshop a staff member was overheard telling several citizens, "We have decided to have a large increase in camping in the Valley."

Is demand from various user groups going to drive the planning process, regardless of legally mandated guidelines?

The goal of never turning anyone away is very commendable, but we are concerned that it may not be realistic, or legal.

Where are the studies which would support creation of the infrastructure needed to accommodate ever-increasing numbers of people and vehicles?

We agree that more people could be accommodated by telling visitors to stay on paved surfaces, or to be content with looking out of a bus window. But would this type of experience be accepted by the visitor? Even if the visitor accepted it, is it really the type of experience which the NPS would wish to encourage?

Which perhaps brings us to what should have been the starting point of the alternatives formulation process. It should have begun with a determination of (1) what type of visitor experience is desired, and (2) what level of impact on natural resources is acceptable. If this has been done, we have seen no evidence of it.

Instead, we are asked our opinion about where additional campgrounds should be put, where additional parking should be put, what is the best way of keeping people out of meadows, how roads should be arranged to deal with congestion, and what we think of pedestrian undercrossings. We could answer these questions, but since our opinions would not be informed by basic background information, would our responses really be of any value?

If this sounds as though we are frustrated, that is because we are. Your staff has devoted an immense amount of thought, energy, and time to this planning process. That investment could still be salvaged if you would put further development of alternatives

on hold until you have come to grips with user capacity, transportation, and parking. And that needs to be closely linked to deciding what type of visitor experience is desired, and how much impact on natural resources is acceptable. Only then should you be asking the public's opinion about specifics.

However, we realize that this process might proceed forward in spite of our objections, so we reluctantly offer the following limited comments.

In general, there should be less development of all kinds, with the exceptions of

a. More parking for visitors by converting spaces presently used for other purposes, and a few new small dispersed parking lots in areas with minimal visual impacts. There should be NO large parking facilities in the west Valley. b. Expanded shuttle system, especially throughout Yosemite Valley in its entirety to Pohono Bridge and Tunnel View. c. Increased bicycling opportunities throughout Yosemite Valley, including west valley to Pohono Bridge. Bicycle trails do not have to be asphalted. d. More toilets throughout Yosemite Valley, where the need is demonstrated by human waste behind rocks and trees. At the very least, information should be provided so visitors can find the toilets that do exist.

Abide by the Olmsted Line, which called for no development west of the area presently occupied by the Yosemite Lodge complex (Lodge/Camp Four/Indian Village)

Camping. Consider only in areas presently occupied with development, such as the DNC stables area. This does NOT include the west Valley. Keep development out of the west Valley---abide by the Olmsted Line prohibition! The sites of the former Upper and Lower River Campgrounds should be restored to natural conditions.

Camping (continued). On page 15, the Workbook suggests expanding camping capacity in Yosemite Valley, or keeping it the same as at present. It does not suggest a reduction. Is it not conceivable that appropriate studies would determine that the present number of campsites is excessive, and there should be a reduction from the present number? The way the query is posed seems to suggest that decisions have already been made in the absence of appropriate studies. (Note the incident cited above where one staff member was heard telling several members of the public, "We have decided to have a large increase in camping in the Valley.")

Rafting. Present impacts from commercial use are excessive. Consider prohibiting floating, or limiting to private activity; one advantage would be reduced liability if people are doing it on their own.

Merced Lake HSC. Reduce quality and quantity of amenities to bring the camp more into line with the wilderness concept. Consider eventual removal of the HSC

Helicopters vs mules. In some areas, and for some purposes, helicopters are considered to be less intrusive than mules. Decisions should be on a case by case basis, using the method which has the least impact. The need for either would be greatly reduced if the HSCs were eliminated.

El Cap meadow. Boardwalks are a visual intrusion and should be avoided. The need to walk into the meadow for a view of El Capitan would be greatly reduced if some of the numerous conifers along the north side of the road were removed. Use temporary rail fencing to direct use away from impacted areas. Parking near the El Cap bridge should be restricted to administrative use, keeping it available for emergencies; this would improve visual esthetics, as well as discouraging human use of the most highly impacted area.

Sugar Pine Bridge. In view of the historic significance of the bridge, efforts should be made to avoid its removal. The present situation is not acceptable, but the bridge does not have to be removed to address it. If the elevated road berm which connects the two bridges were removed, high water would be able to go around the bridge and back into the main channel, rather than being forced into the man-caused cut-off channel. There are numerous constructed features on the river bank which constrain the river from following its natural course. Why single out the Sugar Pine bridge for attention? Its removal would possibly require the placement of more rip-rap in order to protect the Ahwahnee Hotel. If you remove the bridge, then be prepared to allow the river to take out the Ahwahnee.

Road intersections: There should be NO pedestrian over/'under crossings. Problems, if any, should be addressed without adding new structures. Because of the entrenched resistance to removing anything once it has been introduced, the addition of new structures anywhere in the Valley should be approached with extreme caution. If user capacity management were implemented, it might obviate the perceived vehicle/pedestrian problems.

Cathedral Beach. Provide a delineated loop road for unloading, with parking farther away from the picnic area.

Sentinel Beach. Provide a delineated loop road.

At the beginning of this message we commented on the seeming abandonment of the concept of limits. We realize that this has been addressed at times in other settings, but we are responding to the contents of the Workbook. The concept of limits seems to

be absent from that document.

We greatly appreciate the dedication to this Park of you and your staff. It is clear that you have good intentions. This planning process is extremely difficult, and we do not wish to complicate it needlessly. But we do feel that going back to the basics with some additional time and effort at this point would eventually pay off with a vastly improved final plan. The Workbook is commendable for its innovative approach to public involvement. We regret that there has not been sufficient time under the right circumstances to respond to it as the NPS had intended.

George Whitmore, Chair Tehipite Chapter Yosemite Committee Sierra Club

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Correspondence ID: 181 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hello, 12/15/11

Here are some comments on the river plan. We have participated in some of the public planning meetings and much of what we list here has been submitted to you in the past, but we have added a few new items. We hope this list will be helpful and if you have any questions please feel free to contact us:

hank you again for your efforts to preserve and protect the Merced and the surrounding area,

[redacted]

Here are three scenarios of a future trip to Yosemite Valley:

A day trip: Drive, bus, rail or bike to El Portal, or the Crane Flat Entrance or the South Entrance.. Park the car in a high density parking structure. Hop on an express bus or on a local bus for a leisurely ride thru the Valley stopping occasionally on request. Spend the day riding "locals" and hiking ending up at the Entrance Facility to start the trip home. Visitors entering the Park via Tioga Pass would park at the El Portal Entrance Facility.

A two night stay at the Lodge or Curry or the Ahwahnee: Drive, bus, rail or bike to the El Portal, Crane Flat or the South entrance.. Park the car in a high density parking structure (at El Portal this could be adjacent to or even above the sewage treatment plant) Check in at the Lodging reception desk at the Entrance Facility and check your luggage which will be delivered to your room at the Lodge or Curry or the Ahwahnee. Hop on an Express bus with your checked luggage or on a local bus for a leisurely ride thru the Valley stopping occasionally on request. After a nice afternoon in the Valley go to your room to relax before dinner. Next day take a "local" to go down river to check out the climbers on El Cap and have a nice hike and a picnic. Take an Express back to the Lodge. Last day, bring your luggage to the "check out desk" at the Lodge for transfer to the Entrance Facility. Spend the day riding "locals" and hiking ending up at the Entrance Facility to pick up your luggage and start the trip home. Visitors entering the Park via Tioga Pass would park at the El Portal Entrance Facility.

Camping Trip: On arrival at the Entrance Facility check in at the Camping Desk and verify your reservation or just get lucky first come first served. A Driving Permit would be issued allowing you to drive directly to your pre assigned campsite and park your car. Your car would stay in that space until you are leaving the Park. Frequent "local" busses would service the campsite.

Just Passing thru: Stop at the Entrance and get a pass to show in your car's windshield that allows transit from entrance to entrance, but does not allow driving in the valley other than for a direct connection.

A list of comments and suggestions: I. Outstanding values A. Peace and Quiet - imagine the Valley without traffic noise! 1. aggressively enforce traffic laws a. especially the speed limit on downhill Hwy 140 - try driving the speed limit and see how many cars will stack up behind you. b. speed bumps to slow traffic. The speed limits are routinely exceeded by most drivers. c. automatic camera enforcement of speed limits d. aggressively enforce motorcycle and vehicle noise levels 1. use sound level meter check at entrance stations - refuse entry to noisy vehicles. 2. Limit diesel busses in the Valley a. diesel busses are too noisy - OK only as interim solution spend some time by the river in the west end of the Valley. You hear every bus that goes by but only the noisiest cars. a. prohibit idling diesel busses for more than one minute. b. hybrids better (quieter) but electric best. 1. all electric public transit should be the goal - perhaps by 2020? a. fuel cell or plug-in only busses ideal - quieter and non-polluting b. many small and frequent busses better than the large busses now in use c. circulating small "local" mini busses and larger "express" busses to major stops d. mini busses could be stop-on-demand like at McKinley. e. electric vehicles were thought to be unable to deal with conditions in the park, but vehicles have and will continue to improve. Ideal opportunity to partner with major manufacturer to promote their product and provide service to the park. 2. no commercial truck traffic during the day a. this was normal practice in the 1960's b. probably not practical to ban diesel trucks unless a transfer station were established outside the park 3. Interim traffic issue at Camp 6 -Yosemite Village could be addressed with a traffic circle to reduce congestion westbound - but this should only be an interim solution - the real solution is to reduce the number of cars. A. Water Quality 1. maintain water clarity a. remove sand pit and restore wetland below El Portal . We think this may already be planned. 2. maintain unrestricted water flow a. no incursions by bridge abutments b. replace two obsolete auto bridges with foot bridges. 3. add more public restrooms near river 4. improve or remove off road parking within 100 feet of the river to prevent erosion a. don't add more parking, but pave or remove pull out parking - good example needing improvement is along the large

pool above Hwy 140-Big Oak Flat junction 5. leave all fallen trees and snags in the river 6. restore the Bridalveil moraine a. unlikely, but it should be mentioned as it would restore the water table in the valley floor, reducing trees in the meadows because it would become too wet for them to grow B. Air quality 1. limit number and size of campfires a. maximum flame height of 36 inches to eliminate bonfires except for ranger-led public events. b. no fires in picnic areas along the the river within 100 ft of river 2. Ban outdoor smoking within 100 yds of buildings, campgrounds, picnic areas, scenic pullouts, etc. - yes 100 yards, not 100 feet C. Sky 1. control vapor trails with a "no fly zone" of 50 miles north and south of the valley a. currently planes are routed near the valley causing vapor trails to accumulate over the park impacting sunshine and weather - clouds often form over Yosemite when surrounding areas are clear. 2. night sky a. keep all outdoor lighting to a minimum and fully shielded to preserve the dark sky b. ban the use of laser pointers outdoors except for organized astronomical events like those at Glacier Point during the summer D. Recreation 1. fishing regulations based on Yellowstone model a. year round catch and release, no planted fish b. small stretch of bait and keep - in campground area or above Happy Isles. 2. tubing, rafting and boating a. in limited stretch in the valley. The river has priority over recreation so snags and fallen trees should not be removed. b. Guided rafting would mitigate the safety issue with obstructions in the river. Skilled river guides routinely avoid obstacles. c. prohibit all rafting and boating in the canyon stretch between the Pahono Bridge and the park boundary d. personal preference would be for no kayaking above the sewage treatment plant to the park boundary to eliminate interference with fishing. This area is the prime stretch for fly fishing. E. Scenery 1. keep developed areas for public in the east end of the valley, but remove employee residences and employee parking. Provide electric shuttle service for employees. 2. remove or at least replace "housekeeping cabins" - the ugliest structures in the valley 3. Don't destroy El Portal to save the valley a. don't allow El Portal to become like West Yellowstone b. remove the trailer park at El Portal c. keep parking areas away from the river d. no new development between Hwy 140 and the river e. purchase the land for sale on the south side of the river just outside the park to prevent further private development f. restrict further hotel development along the river bank and near the park boundary 1. The existing hotels at El Portal are too close to the river 2. trade land across Hwy 140 for land along the river for any new development 4. remove golf course at Wawona 5. aggressively attack star thistles and other invasive species a. but no pesticide or herbicide use along the corridor 1. keep blackberries and wild grapes outside the park safe to eat! I. Access A. Limit maximum number of visitors in valley 1. limit car access at all times a. use Devils Postpile as model - only shuttle with no private cars during heavy use periods, private vehicles OK during off season. Exceptions for campers with reservations or handicapped. 2. number not determined by number of parking places only, but by people density. 3. reservations for prime time, but first come first served most times 4. do not "improve" roads for better, faster traffic flow - if anything make driving a private car in the valley as inconvenient as possible to encourage the use of shuttles 5. Transfer stations at El Portal, Crane Flat and South entrances could be established where all private cars are parked and visitors shift to a fleet of electric vehicles. 6. Check in and Reception at Entrance Facilities would include check-in for the Lodge, Ahwahnee, and Curry . Visitors' luggage would be transferred to the visitors' rooms. 7. Visitors entering from Tioga Pass would be required to transfer at El Portal 8. High density multistory parking structure at El Portal would be in the vicinity of the sewer plant (over it?) 9. High density parking at south entrance at a site TBD. Don't know this area well enough to specify a site. A. Improve access for handicapped a. add wheelchair access to allow handicapped to get into and out of the river safely I. Education 1. better signage along the river explaining Wild and Scenic River status 2. local, national and international outreach 3. all people have a stake in Yosemite 4. keep them up to date 5. virtual access - website with webcams including views of the river.

Correspondence ID: 182 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Delete, duplicate entry

Correspondence ID: 183 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: My Comments on Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan Having attended an MRP public forum and read through the Planning Workbook, I have one general comment on the draft plan: I would like to suggest a 'litmus test' for all the various plan details that are proposed at this juncture by the planning committee. When writing the next draft, please ask yourselves: "Does this proposed detail or alternative preserve or improve the wild and scenic character of the Merced River?" So many of the management options offered thus far do not pass this litmus test. Many of them look like a "Development Plan". I'd like to remind the planning committee that this plan, as required by law, is all about what is best for the river, that this plan is not titled the "Recreational & Development Merced River Plan". Let's not forget this. Specific examples of what I mean are: 1. In Yosemite Valley ? questions in the Planning Workbook like: Should we remove campsites near the river in Housekeeping Camp? In Pines Campgrounds? Should we remove certain bridges? The answer to all such questions is obvious: If they are affecting the river's flow pattern or flow rate, its ability to change channels, to use subsidiary channels during high flow, to move debris during high flow, or if they are adversely affecting the riparian vegetation that contributes to these characteristics, then yes! Remove them! The next question should be: If we need to move them for the sake of the river, but we want to continue to maintain a level of services, then what alternatives are preferred for where to move them to? The answer for the river would be: farther from the river banks and out of the floodplain. There remain places in Yosemite Valley where additional smaller campgrounds could be located, e.g. in the extensive 'valet parking and construction storage' area east of the Ahwahnee Hotel, or in the lower Yosemite Valley. 2. In El Portal ? questions about currently degraded riparian habitat (Old EP Valley oak understory, the side channel that is cut off by the YI Housing building, the fate of the river floodplain in Abbieville and around the gasoline tank complex, what to do about the growing informal parking around EP Maintenance Complex and EP Store) all have an obvious correct answer: Yes, these are all negatively affecting the natural state of the river and should be removed or minimized. The natural channel migration of the river bottom and associated plant communities needs protection and enhancement in El Portal just as it does in Yosemite Valley. This Wild and Scenic River Plan, to be successful, needs to put the principle of first considering "What does the river need?" into the forefront. For example: No permanent buildings should be put in Abbieville (use it instead as a transit hub, parking or picnic or camping), no permanent buildings should be put in the site where the gasoline facility currently is (use this as graveled-surface parking or a materials manipulation site instead of Greeneyer Sandpit) ? all of these sites will be flooded again in our lifetimes and the damage to permanent structures there will

be costly! If the river cuts a channel into an unbuilt area, then we can let it do that without significant burden to us. This is the longterm advantage to us and to the river if we avoid building in floodplains. Plus we get a cool habitat (literally and figuratively) to hang out in, which is a big quality of life item. Build new structures up the hillside instead, e.g. on Chapel Lane and by extending other lanes in Old EP and in Rancheria, possibly even extending them down to Foresta Road so there are more access points to Old EP than the current two. But don't put more buildings down in the river's own habitat. This proscription serves two purposes: It prevents property damage during floods, and it preserves the river's ability to change its channels and maintains its riparian character. Comment on El Portal plans: Plans to add housing or office space in the core 'downtown' part of El Portal are going to lead to crowding, traffic constriction, an urban feel to the place and to conflicts over use. In short, they are going to cause overbuilding of the core part of Old El Portal town. The Community Hall events are noisy and crowded = don't add more annoyed neighbors into this mix. Keep the downtown of EP flexible in its use and open in its feel, and improve the space around the community hall with public assembly in mind. The public assembly space is unique and cherished in the El Portal community. Many of us would also like to see the old Chapel on Chapel Lane restored as a 'quiet assembly' space for spiritual practices ? reading groups, yoga classes, worship.

Correspondence ID: 184 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: don't know if I am in time to make a comment on future plans for Yosemite National Park. If so, I would likke to make a suggestion regarding these plans. Campfire pollution is a nuisance at any campground that permits would buring campfires. Is there any way to have separate campgrounds where wood buring is not permitted to enable those wishing to breathe clean air to do so? Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 185 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: A more fleshed out response, after 8 hours of studying your workbook more thoroughly: Ecological and Natural Resource Values Q: How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function? A: Leave large woody debris in place, since this is wilderness. Q: How can we conserve our limited water supply? A: Build no further water systems except point-of-use rainwater capture; limit use by administration, concessions, employees; re-use grey water; use waterless urinals & composting toilets. Q: How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? A: Improve signage, interpretive displays & education. Using materials from within the park as much as possible, construct as few boardwalks or stone walks & viewing areas as needed. In September I was in Sequoia National Park for the first time and lost the designated pedestrian path between an overflow parking area and their main museum, so I strayed into an off-limits area and was yelled at by a ranger. The ranger and I took a walk together, during which I pointed out factors mostly under his control: worn asphalt striping, missing fencing & signage, another ranger directing traffic, a photographer in the off-limits area, and pedestrian's need to prioritize being hit by vehicular traffic. I was also lured "off trail" by an electric panel mounted in the parking lot (slightly out of normal pedestrian traffic), since it was constructed to look like a park map from the back (trail view). My guess is that his over-reaction was due to many previous visitors making the same mistake as I did. Sometimes there's a reason for visitor mistakes. As a happy camper with over 30 years teaching Leave No Trace hiking & camping for the Sierra Club, in my experience parks do need to maintain enough infrastructure to help visitors protect and enjoy park resources. A remote high sierra trail across granite needs much less management than a meadow or high-use riparian area, or pedestrian/vehicle interfaces. Help us help you. We have the same goals. Q: What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality? A: Drastically reduce livestock in the park, and provide a composting toilet to each backpacker camp and several of the highest-use trail junctions which are >4 miles from a public toilet or outhouse. Q: Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration? A: Meadows and high-use riparian and lake shore areas. Opportunities for Direct Connection to River Values Q: What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological & ethnographic resources? A: Signage & education. Q: How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections? A: I agree with American Whitewater's 11-23-11 letter. Allowing paddling, rafting, canoeing, paddle-boarding and other non-motorized uses of all of the Merced River segments in all of Yosemite is consistent with the Wilderness Act, and opens up good opportunities for direct connection to river values. It is just as inappropriate for NPS to close the Merced River, even seasonally, "to protect visitors", as it would be to close climbing routes or back country trails "to protect visitors." We are responsible for our own safety in the wilderness. Existing signage advising against water entry above several waterfalls is enough warning. Users connect better with resources like rivers when we have to make our own informed decisions about whether and how to interact with these resources. NPS current river restrictions deny quality river connection. Visitor Use Management Program Q: If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? A: Increase parking modestly at many sites in the Valley, Hetch Hetchy, along Tioga Rd, at Glacier Pt and in parts south of Glacier Pt. Rd. More importantly, parking & information /reservation services at park entrances should be increased and integrated to get visitors to places where they can recreate and enjoy the park with minimal vehicular congestion. Hire a MIS person to do this correctly. This might look like: 1. Fast-tracking those holding permits, fee bus, campsite &/or lodging reservations into the park 2. Providing day-visitors with immediate parking and bus connections, so their vehicles stay out of the congested parts of the park. 3. Providing those who hope to get a permit, fee bus ticket, campsite &/or lodging reservation for the same day with the opportunity to park and immediately either obtain the desired permit, fee bus ticket, campsite &/or lodging reservation, OR to have adequate resources & guidance making alternate plans within the park. Surely some visitors would accept advice to park their car and board a shuttle for a day hike, or accept advice to drive to a less-impacted area such as Hetch Hetchy or Tioga Road. We all benefit when visitors get a reality check on their plans immediately upon entering the park. NPS can partner with 1610 AM and internet resources to guide those without permits or reservations toward enjoying the park at a less impacted location or time/date. Some combination of "push" marketing, RSS feeds, public service announcements etc may shift visitors from being in cars in the valley to either being on buses in the valley, or enjoying some other part besides the valley. Q: Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? Yes. If there were such services, would you use them? Yes, if I could reach my destination with my camping gear, and have some flexibility in my itinerary. NPS can also try congestion pricing for vehicles; this would require having parking & bus connections prior to where entrance fees are collected. Why or why not? A:

Although I've backpacked in Yosemite, I still bring too much stuff. Q: Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? YES Why or why not? A: Yes, because this gives people the "gift" of forcing them to sort through their material belongings and decide what to actually take with them on the bus, in exchange (hopefully) for arriving at their destination faster &/or cheaper. Obviously you would wave buses through with some pre-approved bus identifier, account &/or FastTrak system. Q: If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? A: Maybe. Devil is in the details. Q: 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? A: Yes, if permits were reasonably split between first-come, first-serve, and non-transferable advanced reservations (with ID checks, to prevent scalping). You'd have to somewhat accurately measure the quantity of visitor vehicles in the park and aggressively forecast (& publicly broadcast) at what time permits would run out by for each given park entrance. Of course, all holders of hiking & backpacking permits & lodging reservations must be admitted to the park, by private vehicle unless you commit to transporting them to wherever their reservations or permit are for. Q: What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? A: A: I agree with American Whitewater's 11-23-11 letter. Paddling, rafting, canoeing, paddle-boarding, swimming, wading, fishing and other non-motorized uses of all of the Merced River segments in all of Yosemite is consistent with the Wilderness Act, and opens up good opportunities for direct connection to river values. Removing restrictions on non-commercial river uses is needed to support river corridor recreation opportunities. The Merced is a Class I river in the parts of Yosemite that sane people would float, so there is no need for commercial guide services. Commercial raft/canoe/kayak/paddleboard livery &/or shuttle service may help; restricting use to livery watercraft only would require negotiation with users including American Whitewater, Friends of the River, California Floaters Society & Sierra Club. There is currently no justification for limiting river user-days in Yosemite. Improving the quantity of river access points will avoid undue impact in any one area. Land Uses and Associated Developments Q: How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? A: Share info, continue a mix of non-transferable advanced reservations, and consider a lottery if there's no other way to balance supply and demand. Lotteries are the last choice, since most people lose this gamble. Q: How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? A: replace camping which was lost because it was in the flood plain with camping which is less likely to flood, yet not overly exposed to rock fall. It was probably a mistake to remove some of the campgrounds & roads damaged in the 1997 floods, since the valley has such a small area compared to camping demand. There must be a way to avoid camping in the most flood-prone sites yet maximize camping by accepting some flood risk. Some of the 1997 evacuations could have been avoided by proactively strongly suggesting that people leave the day before, based on conservative forecasting from weather experts at NPS, USFS, NOAA, etc. Don't build camping in the lowest spots. Q: What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor? A: user capacity is best regulated by efficiently managing overall park use & transportation, since river users have to get to the park some how. From what I've seen, use of the Merced Wild & Scenic River corridor is well below capacity. As with other areas of the park, those wishing to find extreme solitude should avoid the summer &/or avoid the valley. Q: How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley? A: Try a zero-based budgeting approach to determining which concession, employee and administrative facilities are most needed; locate the rest out of the park. Q: How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met? A: Decrease operational needs and increase the proportion of users who fulfill operational needs! Many more users are glad to give service to the park, under NPS direction, than NPS currently uses as volunteers. Everyone wants to be valued as part of the solution. What if every NPS Yosemite web page had a prominent link to a URL describing short-term volunteer opportunities, and a way to sign up for them? Perhaps a small portion of permits (hiking, backpacking, vehicle parking, etc) could be reserved for visitors who volunteer. In terms of operational needs, prioritizing can only help. Law enforcement, interpretive services, camp sites, trails, bus parking and snow-plowing seem like better land uses than livestock stables, souvenir sales and private vehicle parking. YOUR TOP SEGMENT MANAGEMENT OPTIONS Please list the top management options you selected for each river segment. If there are actions you would add or actions you are not in favor of, please note them. When making your choices, think about whether the options work together and if there is a theme or commonality among them. SEGMENT 1: Merced River Above Nevada Fall: Options 1B, 2C, 3C, 4A, and 5D (see American Whitewater letter 11-23-11). I am AGAINST options 2B & 4D. Option 2B is not consistent with the Wilderness Act. Helicopters are not appropriate for non-emergency Wilderness use. SEGMENT 2: Yosemite Valley: Options 6D (6A without seasonal closures), 7C* (no net loss of sites), 8C, 9B, 10C (if bridges artificially restrict river flow, they artificially worsen floods and should be removed. Replacing only the Sugar Pine Bridge just moves the flooding to the Ahwahnee, so replace both), 11E (relocate 68 lodging units), 12A, 13C, 14B, 15E, 16B, 17A, 18E (allow all non-motorized paddling & floating in all river sections, year 'round), 19B, 20C (overpass will flood less than underpass), 21A, 22A, 23B, 24A, 25D. SEGMENT 4: El Portal: Options 26C, 27C*, 28A. SEGMENT 5, 6, 7 and 8: South Fork Merced River Wawona: Options 29B, 30A, 31A, 32A. *7C & 29B: Use boulders & blackberry bushes sparingly to mitigate erosion & trampling. From: [redacted] Sent: Friday, November 25, 2011 8:49 PM To: 'yose_planning@nps.gov' Subject: Wild & Scenic Merced River RMP for Yosemite Please allow non-motorized boating in the entire Wild & Scenic sections of the Merced River, including rafting, canoeing, kayaking, paddle-boarding etc. I've read the online workbook, which was very helpful, thank you, and I've hiked & fished much of the length of the main Merced in Yosemite, as well as boated the Briceberg area runs. NPS already has river management tools (such as permitting when demand requires), including in other parks, which allow a good balance of resource protection and user connection to river values while meeting Congress' goals for National Wild & Scenic rivers. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 186 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: American Whitewater Conservation/Preservation
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dave Steindorf California Stewardship Director 4 Baroni Drive Chico, CA 95928 530-343-1871 www.americanwhitewater.org dave@americanwhitewater.org

November 23, 2011

Yosemite National Park Attn: Merced River Plan Via e-mail to yose_planning@nps.gov Re: Merced Wild and Scenic River

Management Plan

Dear Yosemite National Park Planning Staff:

American Whitewater appreciates having the opportunity to provide feedback as Yosemite National Park develops alternatives for the Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. The Merced represents a defining landscape feature of Yosemite National Park, and our members and many in the general public would highly value having the opportunity to experience the Yosemite Valley by boat if given the chance. We are very pleased to see the Park taking steps to allow the public to experience the beauty of the Park and connect with the Merced through paddling.

American Whitewater is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) river conservation organization founded in 1954. With our combined membership and affiliate clubs, we represent the conservation interests of tens of thousands of whitewater enthusiasts across the nation. American Whitewater's mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. Founding principles of our organization include protection of the wilderness character of waterways and promotion of the recreational value of wilderness rivers.

We understand that the Workbook highlights just 35 of hundreds of issues for consideration for the Management Plan, and we are incredibly pleased to see that the Park is considering lifting the ban on paddling and floating on certain segments of the river. However, we are concerned that the segmented approach of the workbook may fail to assess the capacity of the entire Merced River to support paddling ? and thus the need or lack thereof for indirect or direct limits on paddling activities on the entire river. Paddling should be allowed on the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River throughout the year ? and only limited where and to the extent needed to protect and enhance the full suite of ORV's. We propose that in most reaches, management action is unnecessary for limiting the number of visitors who will choose to experience the river in a kayak, canoe or raft. Season, hydrology, and physical challenge will place sufficient natural restrictions on paddling use. On reaches where use is reasonably predicted to approach or exceed capacity, nationally consistent river management techniques should be employed to limit use. Prohibiting the activity is excessive, and those who choose to experience the river should have the opportunity to do so. A segmented approach where paddling is allowed on a few sections of river and prohibited from the rest not only continues an outdated Park policy on the river, but is also not in compliance with the Wilderness Act and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Management Issues: American Whitewater provided extensive comments and management suggestions during the Public Scoping Process in 2010, and we attach those comments for reference. Additionally, we have provided comments in the fillable workbook pages provided by the Park. Additional comments are included below.

Large Woody Debris - As paddlers, we highly value healthy and robust riparian systems, and recognize that an integral part of a healthy river includes large woody debris (LWD). Paddlers recognize it as a natural part of the paddling experience, encounter it often on virtually all other rivers, and accept the risks involved. The presence of LWD in a river should not be a reason to close it. We understand what the NPS General Management Policy 6.4.1 clearly outlines - that "park visitors need to accept wilderness on its own unique terms." We support continued management of LWD on high-use segments of the river, however do not support removing it from the system unless deemed absolutely necessary. Should wood need to be managed in high use areas for recreational passage or to protect infrastructure, movement is generally preferred over removal. Additionally, we do not support using cables around logs in rivers, as cable and rope poses an extreme safety hazard and is not a natural part of a healthy and dynamic river.

User capacity ? We support the goal of protecting the natural landscape of the riparian corridor. In areas where user capacity is exceeded, we support employing indirect and/or direct limits, including a permitting system should one prove necessary. While paddlers are a relatively small segment of backcountry users in the Park, we recognize that all visitors have an impact on the environment. River exploration within the Park has similar impacts as hiking, backpacking, and backcountry fishing, although use of a trail is one way with the river serving as the return route. We support continued management of backcountry users, where hand-powered boating (including kayaking, rafting, pack-rafting) is recognized as a wilderness-compliant activity for all wilderness zones in the park.

Additionally, methods other than prohibiting paddling can be employed to influence paddling use characteristics. For example, the Park Service can recommend that paddlers voluntarily forego sections of the river during certain seasonal or flow conditions, but it should not prohibit users from paddling a reach if they so choose.

Additionally, the Park can require that paddlers have certain craft types and safety equipment in order to enjoy a particular stretch of the river. This will prevent visitors from floating on inflatable toys and mattresses in sections of the river. Further, it is important to consider that river conditions, weather, time of day, technical difficulty, physical challenge, and other factors will all place natural limits on the number of users to the river.

Infrastructure required for access will likely be minimal. On low use segments of the river, defined put-ins and take-outs are not required. In high use areas, we support designated parking for boating and defined access areas at existing bridges and campgrounds, where possible. We support building/improving access at West of Pohono Bridge.

We note that the Park is considering having shuttle service within the Park. Visitors accessing the river will prefer to have vehicle access to the park. If a shuttle service becomes necessary, it needs to accommodate the transport of kayaks, canoes and

rafts.

The Park Service must determine the capacity of the Merced River to support recreational and other uses. A core part of this determination must define the amounts of various kinds of river use that the river and its values can sustainably support. To put a fine point on it, the capacity of the entire Merced River to support paddling is not zero. Paddling must become a component of recreational use of the Merced River, a change in Yosemite management that is in the public interest.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states that the Park Service should not limit recreational uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of the values for which a river was designated.1 The Merced Wild and Scenic River was designated for 24 outstanding biological, recreational, geological/hydrological, scenic and cultural values. Canoeing, kayaking and rafting are human-powered, place-based, low-impact, quiet and non-consumptive ways to connect with the natural landscape. There is no evidence that it substantially interferes with the outstanding remarkable values for which the Merced was designated and therefore should be allowed on the entire length of the river.

Wilderness Act Wilderness Areas are "devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation and historical use",2 and the Wilderness Act describes "wilderness" as an area that has "outstanding opportunities for ... a primitive and unconfined type of recreation."3 Paddling is a form of recreation that is a core part of the Act, and the founders of the Wilderness concept, including Olaus Murie, Bob Marshall and Aldo Leopold wrote specifically of the unique perspective and adventure that paddling in Wilderness areas offer. Exploring the rivers in Yosemite National Park and their related Wilderness Areas by hand-powered craft affords visitors with a unique opportunity to experience park resources, enjoy the river and riparian landscape, and provides inspirational opportunities to experience wild rivers. We ask that you value this experience equally on the entire length of the Merced with the experiences sought by other Park visitors in the Yosemite Wilderness Area. The core element of paddling is experiencing a place through interaction with moving water, going with the natural flow and experiencing the landscape from the river's perspective. This is fully in alignment with the Park's goal to provide opportunities for direct connection to river values. The user capacity of the Merced River in the Wilderness Area is something well above zero, and should be managed as such. Paddling meets with the Park Service's 2006 Management Policy 6.4.3, which pertains to Wilderness and requires that "recreational uses of wilderness will be of a type and nature that ensures that its use and enjoyment (1) will leave it unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, (2) provides for the protection of the area as wilderness, and (3) provides for the preservation of wilderness character."

Conclusion American Whitewater is pleased to see that Yosemite National Park is taking steps toward opening the Wild and Scenic Merced River up to paddling, and appreciate your efforts in working with us throughout the planning process. Paddling needs to be allowed throughout the year on the entire length of the Merced within the Park ? and limited only as necessary. Allowing paddling only on certain segments during certain times of the year falls short of meeting the requirements of the Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Thank you for this opportunity to help shape the alternatives that will be considered in the Merced Wild and Scenic Management Plan.

Sincerely,

Dave Steindorf California Stewardship Director

1 16 U.S.C. '1281(a) 2 16 U.S.C. ' 1133(b); emphasis added. 3 16 U.S.C. ' 1131(c)

WORKBOOK COMMENTS:

How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrological function? -Discontinue removing large woody debris from the river in high use areas. Instead, move it, but only to the extent necessary to allow for recreational passage and preservation of infrastructure.

How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -Please see our comment above about LWD management.

How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? -Paddling should be allowed on the Wild and Scenic Merced in its entirety. It is a Wilderness compliant activity that allows people to connect deeply with the river.

If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -If parking is expanded, it should include areas for paddlers to park their vehicles at river access areas.

Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -If implemented, bus services should accommodate paddlers by providing room for boats (kayaks, canoes, rafts).

Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -It is preferable that boaters have vehicle access to river access areas. If remote parking and shuttle services are implemented they should provide room for boats.

If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -Yes. Please see our comment letter for

more information.

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 any permit issued for floating the river should include parking.

What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? -Boating 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.

How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -Allow primitive overnight camping in selected areas on the river corridor, requiring Leave No Trace practices. This would require zero additional infrastructure.

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-round. We support having a permit system on high-use stretches of the river for both private and commercial activity. It should be noted that a variety of factors, including hydrology, weather and physical challenge will limit use in these areas by default. While the Park may choose to recommend that boaters stay off the river, closing it is unnecessary and paddling should not be prohibited. Additionally, in these high use areas, river access points should be built at appropriate locations to prevent erosion and trampling of vegetation.

We support a combined version of alternatives 6A and 6B (Large Woody Debris Management). 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 to allow for recreational passage and protection of infrastructure in high use areas. Further, removal will 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.

Regarding Issue 7 (Campsites): 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 Phono Bridge. This is the location with the best river access and provides for the most complete run on the Merced through Yosemite Valley.

Paddling should be allowed on the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River. Allowing padding in this segment in particular may improve issue #1 (High Encounter Rates on Wilderness Trails), as some people will be experiencing part of the Merced Wild and Scenic corridor from the river. This will reduce 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 overall. 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 throughout the Wilderness Area will bring it into compliance with the Wilderness Act.

Boating should be allowed on all stretches of the Wild and Scenic Merced River.

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 (continuing to allow paddling without management of LWD).

Removing large woody debris from rivers is not necessary to ensure 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 some cases. Further, removal will only be necessary when movement does not accomplish these goals

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.

Open the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River to boating all year! Resource values can be protected, and high use areas can be managed through a permitting system. This vision can be implemented and it is realistic and feasible.

Correspondence ID: 187 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form

Correspondence: How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -provide hardened pathways to channel foottraffic.

Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration? -Stretches around old river campgrounds

What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality? -Remove stock from valley and limit use of stock to service Merced High Sierra Camp

? If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -Camp 6, effectively designed multi-level facility

? Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -Yes, if convenient and if vehicular traffic is reduced

? Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -Yes, it is time to greatly reduce car traffic in the valley, it is the no#1 threat to the river experience

? If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -Yes, use a fair reservation system ensuring access for tour groups as well as family/locals. Only necessary during peak season

? 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? -#2: I would support this system, but I would prefer to use the valley during non-peak times

? What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? -Limited floating/boating (controlled by NPS/concessionaire), low impact fly fishing, hiking, biking.

? How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? -Convert more employee housing to lodging, employees can use shuttle system

? How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -Support increase of Camp 4 and increase of walk-in/tent only at north pines within existing footprint. Limited walkin at old river campgrounds. Limit length of stay to provide more opportunities

? What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor? -A general reduction in level of services and ammenities is warranted. Less resteraunts and shops

More hardened, delineated trails and fencing to concentrate use but increase access. Remove auto bridges and leave woody debris in river. Provide hardened areas for general access to the river and discourage dispersed use through trail design etc.

Slight increase in lower density camping than currently available, more walk-in sites will reduce overall impact. Aim to provide more camping experiences outside of the Valley. Camping in general should be encouraged but the Valley is a one-of-a kind place and cannot handle the amount of camping use people would prefer. Limit length of stay in campgrounds and use a lottery system to allocate peak season.

Limit flood plain development, relocate or remove campgrounds and other facilities near river corridor.

My vision for the Valley is exemplified in the new Yosemite Falls visitor area. This is an excellent example of a practical way to concentrate visitor use onto hardened surfaces to protect the resources while allowing a great experience by the user and a connection to the river and valley. I believe this approach of concentrating use while allowing many areas to remain relatively untrammeled is a positive compromise

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Correspondence ID: 188 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: ? If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -Please DO NOT expand parking lots or pave new ones.

? Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -Yes.

? Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -Yes, they should be mandatory. It would solve the

parking and congestion problem.

? If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -No, too complicated. Prefer remote parking and shuttles.

? 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? -No, too complicated. Prefer remote parking and shuttles.

? How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? -Why are we assuming that the current mix is the best one?

? How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -Locate the camp grounds away from the river.

Very excited to see many new options for campgrounds in Yosemite Valley! Explore them all and pick the ones with least environmental impact. Keep the campgrounds a bit away from the river and provide access points so that the river can both be enjoyed and protected. With new campgrounds being set up and existing ones being moved away from the river it makes sense to also make some other much needed changes. Separate the campgrounds depending on use and services provided! Something like this: 1. RV campground. Road loop easily accessible with a larger vehicle, larger parking pad, dump station, etc. 2. Car campground. Much like the sites today with a parking pad, picnic table, firepit. Have sites of different sizes, eg one car, two car, group. 3. Walk-in tent campground. With a central parking lot and a short distance to walk. These sites do not need road loops, saving on space and expense yet providing a more pleasant tent camping experience. 4. Backpackers campground with no associated parking as the campers have either hiked or bussed it in to the valley. These sites can be completely away from the road with just hiking trails for access. With all of these types of campgrounds there could be special sites for larger groups so that scouts or family gatherings could have a nice spot that is somewhat separated from the rest of the campground.

Correspondence ID: 189 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: ? How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function? -Interfere with natural processes only for safety and protection of infrastructure. Where critical and feasible remove infrastructure.

? How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -Limit/restrict user access.

? Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration? -Valley meadows.

? What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality? -Prevent erosion/pollution.

? If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -Limit increase to Daily Use Areas. Consider reduction of roadside parking.

? Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -Yes, the current Shuttle system is exceptional

? Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -Yes, once in the Valley an excellent shuttle system is already in place.

? If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -Yes. Many visitors are more than a day's drive from the park. They should be able to know in advance whether they can drive into the park when they arrive.

? 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, I support the use of permits and I would use permits.

? What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? -Camping, hiking, floating, swimming, picnics can be supported by quotas and/or permits during high use conditions.

? How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? -Limit access to manageable numbers that do nit degrade the experience of others. Use non-transferable advance reservations.

? How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -Do not think it is possible.

First determine if existing camping is compatible with protecting river values.

? What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor? -Shuttle services and concentrated areas of commercial activity, i.e. shops, museums, dining, etc.

? How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met? -Define optimum user capacity and do not allow it to be exceeded.

Limit interference with natural river cycles for safety and protection of infrastructure.

Restrict use to prevent overcrowding. Greater visitor awareness and education will result if visitor access is linked to advance planning.

Do not see that expansion is appropriate. Rather limit use and require more advance planning/education by visitors during peak usage times of the year.

Where consistent overcrowding occurs do not hesitate to restrict visitor use. During peak use seasons visitors will be required to plan in advance and obtain necessary access permits.

Correspondence ID: 190 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: ? How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function? -By the reduction and control of camping near the riparian zones and modify the "recreational" term towards the "scenic" classification.

? How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -By the use of pedestrian bridges and trails

? Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration? -Yosemite Valley

? How can we conserve our limited water supply? -Through the use of catch basins and recycling water where ever possible.

? What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality? -By increasing the usage of the "scenic rivers" classification.

? What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources? -When located have the areas "marked" as non-accessible to the public because of the on-going research.

? How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? -NPS should mark put-in and take-out points for rafting and etc.

? If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -10%. Some expansion could be accomplished by Camp 6, day use parking area.

? Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -Yes. Yes, whenever our stay enabled the usage of such services.

? Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -Yes. Because there is great need of expanded shuttle services do to the ecological impact of visitors in the park.

? If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -YES.

? 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? -I would support a day use parking/vehicle permit system.

? What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? -I believe rafting would be acceptable as long as put-in and take-out areas are defined, along with swimming and fishing in specified areas.

? How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? -I think day usage should be

regulated as overnight visitors would be regulated by the accommodations available.

? How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -Additional areas would be needed to be developed while stil protecting riparian zones.

? What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor? -There should be a mechanism for the overview of water quality and to lessen the removal large woody debris.

? How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley? -A reduction of the administrative foot-print would be facilitated by using more of the facilities in El Portal

? How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met? -By creating a day user permit system, the "usage" would be reduced thus requiring less resources depending on the final numbers allowed.

There should be some research completed on developing more campgrounds but without having riparian zone impact and minimal impact to the ecology. There should also be continuing bioremediation, restoration, and stainability to al of Yosemite not just the valley.

Cultivations of fill material which would allow flooding cycles and other natural processes to restore to a more natural state.

I believe a reduction of the High Sierra Camp reservations would bring about less traffic and also reduce the use of stock to supply the camp. Back packer's areas should be maintained so that impact is centralized.

To protect the south fork of the Merced river, the golf course should have it's affluent more closely regulated. This would reduce algae blooms and other influences.

I think more areas (with in Segment 2) need to be listed as wild and have very limited access to them.

I think that predetermined areas of the Merced should have some interactive displays and some areas should have Ranger lead education.

I believe there should be regulated access to the river, but without having a "police" presence model.

I believe primitive structures should be used and to provide interactional education for experiences.

I have more of a preservationalist point of view. With more regulation as to numbers of people most of my concepts are workable and would bring about a more sustainable future for Yosemite and bring about a "more" natural experience for the masses.

Correspondence ID: 191 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc. Business
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: All of the options we consider in the draft plan must achieve the goals of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to protect and enhance river values.* In some cases, a "take no action" option may be feasible if that management consideration can be addressed in a different way.**

*Enhance river values in a matter consistent with the river's designation? **Actions may have offsetting impacts such that "no action" is of greatest relative benefit.

The Merced River Plan The Merced River Plan will provide overarching guidance for river protection and public use within the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor inside Yosemite National Park. The National Park Service is committed to a collaborative, interdisciplinary planning approach, rooted in public comment. Our planning process is leveraging the best available science and technology to create an implementable comprehensive management plan that will provide sound guidance for river management today and into the future.*

*It is my understanding that the act setting aside the Merced River did not include separate values, but that the designation as Wild and Scenic meant that the river met conditions for that designation. Additionally, shouldn't the goal include the "enjoyment" perspective included in the Organic Act?

User Capacity Overview According to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, comprehensive management plans must address user

capacities. User capacity includes the kinds and amounts of human use that a river area can sustain without adverse impact on the outstandingly remarkable values, water quality, and freeflowing character of the river area, the quality of recreation experience, and public health and safety. The plan will therefore identify the activities and associated use levels that are appropriate while continuing to protect and enhance the values for which the river was included in the National Wild and Scenic River System.*

*In other areas the reference is enhancement of ORV. Is adverse impact an appropriate measurement also? Does it apply more often than this instance?

Think About: How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function? How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration?*

Isn't the designation as Wild & Scenic indicative of its free flowing condition. Is "restoration of free-flowing condition" part of Wild & Scenic act? Administrative Infrastructure: Infrastructure such as housing and office space are necessary to support operations and ensure visitor safety and resource protection. The availability of space for these and other uses is limited in Yosemite. For decades, the park's goal has been to relocate non-essential administrative infrastructure out of Yosemite Valley and to the El Portal Administrative Site. As a part of this Merced River planning process, the park will evaluate each major administrative facility to ensure that the facility does not adversely impact river values.

*Significant infrastructure has been added in El Portal over the years. What is the impact of this on infrastructure inside the Park? What areas are left for additional infrastructure? Is an evaluation of the El Portal site part of this planning process?

Visitor Use Management Program 1 Segment 1 Wilderness Trails: High Encounter Rates High encounter rates on trails between Little Yosemite Valley and Merced Lake indicate Wilderness experience integral to Recreation ORV in this segment is impacted temporally and spatially. Management Options: 1A: Reallocate Wilderness permits to decrease use on this trail. 1B: Incorporate High Sierra Camp use into trailhead quotas. 1C: Your Ideas? *

*Since this trail feeds other trails, further restriction here to reduce "encounter rates" will deprive people of other wilderness experiences accessible by this trail. Is the level of use harming the resource? Design for the use?

Recreational User Conflicts Recreational user conflicts between hikers and stock users has been highlighted in public comment and has implications for visitor experience and the Recreation ORV in this segment. Most of the concern pertains to stock impacts, including concentrations of manure, on trails. Management Options: 2A: Reduce the extent of trails maintained for stock in this area, thus reducing the number ofstock needed to maintain them. 2B: Use helicopters instead of stock to reduce user conflicts. 2C: Close or reduce Merced Lake High Sierra Camp capacity (to 42 beds or less) to limit concessioner stock use.* 2D: Your Ideas? **

*Need more data as to stock use. How much use is there from each segment (day visitors, special permit use, NPS and authorized concession activity) and is there a difference in impact by type of use? Can the impact be reduced through using another trail or helicopter and what is the relative impact to the options?

**All stock use is to serve visitors in authorized activities. It's hard to understand if a reduction at Merced Lake, for example, would result in a significant impact on overall use.

Land Uses and Associate d Developments 3 Merced Lake Backpackers' Campground: Use Levels High levels of use affect Wilderness character and the Wilderness experience integral to the Recreation ORV in this segment. Management Options: 3A: Reduce use by lowering quotas for trailheads that lead to the Merced Lake area. 3B: Allow only limited dispersed camping at Merced Lake. 3C: Retain Backpackers' Campground so that visitor use is concentrated. This strategy helps to protect resources and address human waste concerns. 3D: Your Ideas? *

*Since this is a trail head and camp area providing access to other more remote locations further restrictions here would seem to unnecessarily impact people. This is a camping area with good proximity to Yosemite Valley and serves and important location for an introduction to back country and wilderness experiences.

5 Little Yosemite Valley Backpackers' Campground: Crowding Crowding at Little Yosemite Valley Campground impacts Wilderness character and the Wilderness experience integral to the Recreation ORV in this segment. Management Options: 5A: Reduce trailhead quota 25%; retain composting toilet. 5B: Retain Backpackers' Campground so that visitor use is concentrated. This strategy helps to protect resources and address human waste concerns. 5C: Convert to dispersed camping and remove compost toilets, which will necessitate a ~75% reduction in trailhead quotas and associated zone capacity. 5D: Your Ideas? *

*Keep use at existing levels and minimize impacts. Is "wilderness character and wilderness experience" scientifically determined or is this different for different individuals? Does this terminology relate to Wild and Scenic Rivers or Wilderness Act, or both?

Cultural: Yosemite Valley Native American ethnographic resources include a linked landscape of specifically mapped traditional plant gathering areas. ? The Yosemite Valley Archeological District is a linked landscape that contains dense

concentrations of resources that represent thousands of years of human settlement along this segment of the Merced River. *

*If human settlement is an ORV ? are there multiple types and forms of settlement that contribute to that value? Not just Yosemite Valley Native American?

Ecological and Natural Resource Values 6 Clarks Bridge to El Cap Bridge: Large Woody Debris Management Long-term removal of large woody debris from the river to facilitate boating, between Clark's Bridge and El Cap Bridge, has reduced channel complexity and compromised riparian structure and aquatic habitat. Management Options: 6A: Discontinue removal of large woody debris. Allow boating seasonally. Educate visitors about risk of river use and allow seasonal closures to protect visitor safety. 6B: Continue the removal of large woody debris for safety reasons and to protect infrastructure. Where possible, tie cables around logs in stream to temporarily protect bridges and release material at low water flows. This option will mitigate removal elsewhere in the river. * 6C: Actively restore large woody debris or use engineered log jams where there is a lack of channel complexity, such as up-stream of Stoneman Bridge. 6D: Your Ideas? **

* Should note here that long-term removal of large woody debris from river is also to preserve infrastructure and provide for safety of other activities, not just to facilitate boating.

** Current practice is to mostly relocate woody debris to areas where it won't threaten infrastructure and won't pose danger to boaters, swimmers, fishermen and other recreational users. Continue current practice.

7 Riparian Zone: Campsites High visitor use at Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds has resulted in vegetation trampling and riverbank erosion, impacting both water quality and riparian habitat. Excess erosion is caused by high flows on bare soil. Additionally, the proximity of campsites to the water precludes riparian vegetation development. Management Options: 7A: Relocate or remove campsites (where possible), that are within the ordinary high water mark and the riparian zone. Design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions. 7B: Manage visitor use at existing campsites by delineating parking and tent pads and locating this infrastructure as far away from the river as possible to prevent vegetation trampling and erosion. Design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions. 7C: Your Ideas? *

* Recreation is part of the ORV and protecting 100% of the river bank from access isn't the goal. Harden certain locations and rotate access from year to year to engage in cyclic restoration to allow for continued river access and enjoyment.

Visitor Use Management Program 9 Valley: Camping Demand Public comment indicated a desire to have more camping opportunities in Yosemite Valley. Management Options: 9A: Develop new campgrounds in places such as, north of Upper Pines Campground (Upper Pines Walk-in), between Southside Dr. and the Upper Pines Campground (Upper Pines Loop Addition), at the concessionaire stable north of North Pines Campground (Stables Area) and/ or expanding Backpackers' Campground to the west. 9B: In addition to Option 1, identify new campground locations or expand existing campgrounds outside of the Valley. 9C: Retain the existing number of campsites in Yosemite Valley; and do not add campsites. 9D: Your Ideas? *

* The number of campsites is far below the number called for in the 1980 GMP and the number which has traditionally been provided. Add campgrounds to protect this cultural experience. The experience of camping in Yosemite Valley should have equal merit to the concept of wilderness interaction. It is an introduction to the great outdoors that is of great value in connecting generations to national parks.

Land Uses and Associate d Developments 10 Sugar Pine Bridge/Ahwahnee Bridge/ Road Berm: Free-Flowing Condition Sugar Pine Bridge severely impacts the free-flowing condition of the Merced River and causes localized impacts to hydrologic function. Management Options: 10A: Remove Sugar Pine Bridge, road berm, and Ahwahnee Bridge and re-route road/trail to the north bank of the river. 10B: Remove Sugar Pine Bridge and road berm, but leave Ahwahnee Bridge to provide access to Lower and Upper Pines Campgrounds. (A multi-use trail could be redirected across Ahwahnee Bridge and through Lower Pines Campground.) 10C: Replace both existing bridges with foot bridges designed to protect and enhance the free-flowing condition of the river. 10D: Your Ideas? *

* As noted on Page 4 - Wild and Scenic Law was designed to balance policy of dam building with free flowing rivers. Comment notes impact is localized. This is a nuance that is extreme in this recreation area.

Cultural: Yosemite Valley Native American ethnographic resources include a linked landscape of specifically mapped traditional plant gathering areas. ? The Yosemite Valley Archeological District is a linked landscape that contains dense concentrations of resources that represent thousands of years of human settlement along this segment of the Merced River. *

* The Ahwahnee hotel is a National Historic Landmark and has significant cultural significance. Should this and similar assets be mentioned in the cultural paragraph?

Ecological and Natural Resource Values 11 Housekeeping Camp: Riparian and Flood Plain Impacts Several Housekeeping Camp units are located in the two to ten year floodplains and impede hydrologic function. Additionally, high visitor use at the camp has resulted in vegetation trampling and riverbank erosion, impacting both water quality and riparian vegetation. Excess erosion is caused by high flows over parking areas, around tent cabins and down roadways and foot trails. Management Options: 11A: Strategically remove up to 93 lodging units currently located within the riparian area. Where possible, relocate these

lodging units to another more resilient location within Yosemite Valley. Replace riprap with bioengineered stabilization. 11B: Keep all sites and delineate river access in resilient locations and restore the riparian area to natural conditions. 11C: Remove 68 lodging units adjacent to the river, as outlined in the 1980 General Management Plan. 11D: Remove all lodging units, infrastructure and riprap and restore the floodplain and riparian ecosystem to natural conditions. 11E: Your Ideas? *

* Housekeeping Camp provides river access in a unique way that is prized by generations of users. Reduce impacts by delineating access points, hardening of surfaces and rotation of access locations.

12 Upper and Lower Rivers Campground Areas: 1997 Flood Impacts This area is critical to providing hydrologic connectivity Ahwahnee and Stoneman Meadows; however, it is currently not functioning as a healthy riparian and floodplain ecosystem due to lost topography (graded landscape and filled drainages), compacted soils, existing (amphitheater) and abandoned infrastructure, and invasive plant infestations. Management Options: 12A: Provide visitor use opportunities and access (such as camping, parking, and picnic areas) to only the northern portion of the former campgrounds, away from the riparian and floodplain ecosystem. Restore eroded riverbanks and riparian corridor. Delineate river access points in resilient locations. 12B: Restore visitor use opportunities (such as camping, parking and picnic areas) throughout the entire area of the former Upper and Lower Rivers Campgrounds. Ensure protection of river values by locating infrastructure above the high water mark and outside of the riparian area. Restore eroded riverbanks and impacted riparian vegetation. 12C: Fully restore the floodplain and riparian ecosystems and designate river access points to manage visitor use and minimize future impacts. 12D: Your Ideas? *

* Recreational use is part of ORVs. Use other methods (rotation of use, shorter season, limited access points) to also allow for cultural resource of visitor access.

Land Uses and Associate d Developments 15 Camp 6 Intersection: Congestion Throughout the peak summer season, significant delays in outbound traffic flow occur at the intersection of the Camp 6 parking lot and Northside Drive. Management Options: 15A: Design a roundabout and pedestrian under-crossing to address intersection performance. Due to space considerations, this would likely require moving the Concessioner Headquarters. 15B: Redesign parking area to protect riparian zone and improve operational efficiency. 15C: Relocate pedestrian crossing to northwest corner of parking area to avoid intersection issues. Relocate information kiosk within the lot so that it is easier to find. 15D: Install temporary, seasonal electronic pedestrian crossing signals. 15E: Realign intersection to be a true four-way stop. Allow inbound access to parking area along utility corridor from Sentinel Drive. Include pedestrian under-crossing and relocate other pedestrian crossing to northwest corner of parking area to avoid intersection issue. Relocate information kiosk within the lot so that it is easier to find. 15F: Your Ideas? *

* Develop plan and system to regulate traffic to desired use levels, including restriction outside the Park before traffic becomes a problem in Yosemite Valley.

Ecological and Natural Resource Values 16 Leidig Meadow: Informal Trail Impacts Informal trails in Leidig Meadow cause habitat fragmentation and impact the Biological ORV. Management Options: 16A: Remove social trails and restore meadows. Install boardwalks to prevent future impacts. Fence bike path on north side of Swinging Bridge. 16B: Remove social trails and restore meadow. Install fencing and place signs to educate visitors about human impacts to meadows. 16C: Your Ideas? *

*Well placed and hardened surfaces (boardwalks) have been proven to work. Why add fencing and restrictions? Seems inappropriate for a Wild & Scenic River.

Visitor Use Management Program * 18 Yosemite Valley: Paddling and Floating Public comments suggest expanding paddling and floating to include a longer stretch of the Merced River in Yosemite Valley. Other comments suggest variations on allowing or prohibiting commercial or private paddling and floating. Management Options: 18A: Allow paddling and floating in a limited section of the river that has minimal resource impact concerns. Allow both private and commercial use. Require permits for all paddling vessels (both private and commercial) within season. Limit the number of both private and commercial vessels to a specified capacity (boats per day or at one time). No restrictions on swimming and water play throughout the summer. Designate put-in and take-out points (and stopping points along the way). 18B: Same as Option 18A, but allow paddling and floating on a longer stretch of river to El Cap Crossover. Allow private floating only by permit. Open a longer stretch of the river for this use (from Clark's Bridge to Pohono Bridge.) Allow use throughout the year as long as water conditions are suitable. Prohibit commercial floating. To limit resource impacts, designate vessel put-in and take-out locations. 18C: Similar to Option 18A, but would only allow commercial floating opportunities in a limited stretch of river with designated put-ins and take-outs. Limit number of vessels on the river per day or at one time. Allow limited season. Continue educational and safety program. Prohibit private floating of vessels. Swimming and water play would continue. 18D: Prohibit all paddling and floating (all vessels) in the Valley. Swimming and water play would continue to be allowed. 18E: Your Ideas? **

*-What about other river uses? Fishing? Impact of all or some uses in combination? How are impacts determined? -Misses benefits of commercial rafting: Safety ? instruction and equipment Resource ? interpretive information provided. Locations for stopping identified as well as guidelines for minimal impact. Traffic ? return to Curry Village part of the experience and reduces need for stage cars which add to traffic

**To a large degree, this is self policing. Fewer campgrounds and overnight visitors, fewer people interacting with river in this manner. Engagement of fun in a section of the river classified as recreational should be okay.

Land Uses and Associate d Developments 20 Yosemite Lodge: Intersection Congestion Throughout the peak summer season, significant delays in outbound traffic flow are experienced at the pedestrian crossing from Yosemite Lodge to Lower Yosemite

Falls. Management Options: 20A: Relocate lodge entrance and replace with pedestrian promenade and underpass for pedestrian access to Lower Yosemite Falls. 20B: Implement an electronically controlled intersection for both vehicles and pedestrians. 20C: Construct a pedestrian overpass as primary road crossing. Provide for accessibility requirements by maintaining a secondary crossing at surface level. 20D: Your Ideas? *

*The location of parking in relation to Yosemite Lodge access is what drives a significant portion of this issue. Prior Yosemite Lodge plan has good solution to this issue by relocating the road to improve safety for the intersection and reduce traffic congestion.

Misc Comments:

Don't use fencing. Providing places where people can be (hardened surfaces) is adequate

This seems silly. How much time would this be used? The permanent impact of infrastructure (parking surfaces) for 5% (?) or less use is not appropriate. In emergency, one traffic lane can be blocked.

Aside from the addition of picnic area facilities, NPS should consider how they might redesign these spaces at Cathedral and Sentinel Beach. Our observation is that over the last several years, Hispanic usage of these spaces has gone up yet, we as a Park do not have group picnic areas at these sites (to accommodate large families visiting together).

Almost all of this impact preceded designation as Wild and Scenic. At what point does the law require removal of existing structures and infrastructure to achieve "enhancement"? Can you reference other river plans where this has been the case?

Control river access points and rotate from year to year. Recreation is a value that needs to be protected.

Are there negative impacts from impoundment or is this an issue of "free flowing"? What proportion of water is captured at peak and minimal flows? Is the impoundment significant to aquatic life at its current level.

Correspondence ID: 192 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: > Comments - Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan, Fall 2011 > > [redacted] > [redacted] > [redacted] > > One of the major objectives of the plan is "to protect and enhance > river values". To do this it must be remembered that the river is > natural and will act naturally. This means during high flow events it > will erode, scour, deposit, change course, and change location; all of > this will completely disregard any anthropogenic structures and > thoughts that might try to confine and stabilize its flows. These > flows will also have the potential to wipe out bridges, leave bridges > behind and isolated from the river, destroy infrastructure, buildings, > and roads. The natural floodplain, which is part of the river but used > only during flood events, extends from talus to talus on opposite > sides of Yosemite Valley. The plan does not seem to take into account > that the river will exercise its natural rights over time and destroy > most of what you seem to be planning in this iteration of the Merced > Wild and Scenic River Plan. You show the 100 year flood boundary but > with climate change these flood limits may be just estimates of what > is to come: larger and more frequent events. If you want a free > flowing river you must take out confining bridges, berms, roads, and > other structures that will inhibit the river through time. > Additionally, the NPS does not seem to take into account the full > force of rockfall into the plan. Rockfall is only identified by the > calculated and inferred rock fall hazard line. But in reality the NPS > needs to realize that rockfall actually exceeds these lines on the map > and that you have not considered the blow down generated by rockfalls. > After all, it was the blow down from the Glacier Point rockfall that > toppled trees and killed folks in that event. Blow down will carry > clear across the valley and poses a significant risk to people within > the valley. Rockfall events also have the potential to influence the > course of the river. > The plan does not adequately address visitor experience and visitor > capacity specifically with transportation and parking. The NPS must > start out with visitor experience and the impacts of visitors on > natural resources. What kind and type of experience(s) do we want for > visitors to the valley to have? Once you have identified the visitor > experience bounds you can then formulate the visitor capacities, on > high use days and times, that will allow all visitors to experience > that defined visitor experience and resource impact limits. > Things that would help with capacity are having a shuttle service that > goes from Mirror Lake at the east end of the valley to Pohono Bridge > on the west end of the valley. This would get people out of their > cars. Have plenty of frequent buses and stops so people can get out > and walk, sight see and experience the valley. Parking is a problem. > Ways to help this include: get all concessionaire employee housing out > of the valley. This would free up parking spaces for visitors. It > would also open up current parking places taken by housing - the > parking lot behind Degnan's and the housing in the Yosemite Lodge > parking lot for example. Why does the concessionaire need over 1000 > employees in the valley over night when the NPS only has less than 100 > employees staying overnight in the valley? Make the concessionaire bus > in their employees from outside of the valley to work in the valley. > Get rid of the Camp 6 parking lot, it is polluting the river with gas, > oil and greases from parked vehicles. > With regard to traffic, do not build structures (over/under passes, > lights, etc.), instead on high use days and times get a person out > there to direct traffic and pedestrians. This does not degrade the > outstanding remarkable values as would infrastructure. > Rafting is an issue. Make this non-commercial, and let the user take > all risks from downed trees in the water just as climbers take all > risk from their activities. These downed trees are a natural part of > the river process, creating natural habitat for fish and other > animals, and should not be removed. > With regard to the El Portal area the NPS should consider restoring > the old channel wetland in the western end of El Portal proper, > eliminating the levee to protect the trailer park (allow natural > processes to occur) and allowing the river to refill and over take the > sand pit excavation. > Finally, consider the number of overnight lodging (visitors and > concessionaire) beds versus camp sites in Yosemite Valley. Maybe some > of the lodging/concessionaire beds should be

removed and turned into > camp sites as there is such a high demand for camping in the valley.

Correspondence ID: 193 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Friends,

I am working on a project to develop accommodations outside the gates of the park with a shuttle service. Would you please send me a summary of the Yosemite Valley Plan so that I might find out how I can help within the overall plan to help preserve the park.

Thank you,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 194 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: As a life-long canoeist, kayaker and rafter, I'm thrilled to hear you are considering lifting the paddling ban on the Merced in the Valley. Just like climbing, bicycling, hiking, and camping in the Valley, paddling can be controlled and managed, and its an amazing way to experience the beauty of the world. Most paddlers have a great respect for wilderness, tread lightly on the wilderness, and bring home more trash than they start out with. We don't want to see floating beer parties ? but canoes, rafts, and kayaks gently moving downstream through the beauty which the Merced traverses. Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 195 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am planning my first trip to Yosemite and I just saw there is "talk" of opening the river to paddling. I think that well managed it is safe and will not negatively impact the park. It is really beautiful to see a park like Yosemite while paddling down a river. Also I think a small fee should be charged every time one runs down the river. Different rates for different crafts such as big rafts, canoes and kayaks. In our days of shrinking budgets it would be a great way to fund some improvements and maintenance for the park.

sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 196 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To whom it may concern I can't imagine a more stunning way to see Yosemite than paddling on the Merced, with only the sound of my paddle dipping in the water and the quiet lap of the water against the boat, punctuated by oohs and ahhs at the occasional call of a bird, sighting of a bobcat or first look at a waterfall. The ban on paddling at Yosemite makes no more sense than forbidding climbing the rock walls, or backpacking. However, you should do more. Paddling should be allowed on the Merced throughout the Park, as this is consistent with all other activities allowed in the park, and is the standard for water recreation on other wild and scenic rivers throughout the US. Best, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 197 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: The entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River should be open to public use through individual (non-motorized) boating. This helps achieve the goal of greater public enjoyment of the park. I would very much enjoy being able to float the river through the park. Sincerely, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 198 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the Mercedes Wild and Scenic River. Hikers and anglers (dispersed visitors) prefer exploring along and over the river areas with minimal disturbances from other visitors in order to enjoy the solitude and area wildlife. These visitors primarily move along land until they reach a section of river that might be less crowded, best for fishing, or one that offers the best scenery. Paddlers move linearly down-river between access points. Paddlers enjoy paddling through challenging rapids with minimal encounters with other visitors. Since paddlers move unidirectional,

paddling groups starting at different times rarely meet along the river, unless one group is stopping. However, paddlers will encounter all the dispersed visitors situated along the river. Because hikers and paddlers move through a river corridor differently, they have the highest probability of creating encounters when they are forced to share the same sections of creek. Limiting paddling to a few stream sections, will maximize the probability of wildlife, hikers and anglers to enjoy the river disturbance free. Allocation of creek sections should be based on the demographics of hikers/anglers/paddlers visiting the Mercedes. Due the over congestion, any paddling opportunities should remain outside of the valley. Thank You. [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 199 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I've been excited to hear that the Park is in the process of evaluating the Merced river management plan and that there is a possibility of opening the river to recreational boating. I've done a good deal of both whitewater and flat water boating within wilderness areas on Wild and Scenic Rivers, including through Grand Canyon National Park. This provides an outstanding means of recreation that, if properly managed, can be entirely in keeping with the goals and values of wilderness management. I strongly support opening the entire Wild and Scenic Merced to recreational paddling. [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 200 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please vote to open up Yosemite National Park and the Merced River to white water kayaking. Kayaking should be added to the other human powered sports such as rock climbing, back packing, bicycling etc. Kayakers move down the river, leaving the environment undisturbed. No special facilities are needed. Please do not restrict enjoyment of the river. [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 201 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Yosemite Park Planners:

As a Californian, a Yosemite enthusiast, and a whitewater paddler, I respectfully ask you to allow paddling on the entire length of the wild and scenic Merced River. The Merced is an extremely valuable part of Yosemite. By allowing boating on the Merced, the NPS would provide more visitors with a way to connect with the park in a manner only possible on the river. Boaters would view the valley's majesty at the river's unhurried pace, feel the cold water, melted from surrounding peaks, see wildlife, and simply have the opportunity to slow down and enjoy Sierran majesty.

Thank you for your consideration,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 202 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: The NPS (our favorite agency next to NOAA they have better satellite images)?is best serving the boating users by allowing paddling on the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River! Resource values can be protected by managing high use stretches of the river through a permitting system. WITH ROBUST private amounts of boaters allowed!!!!!!!!!!! The most important question that the Park asks is how they can improve opportunities for direct connection to the values of the river. Please include me on any e-mail or hardcopy proposals that are disseminated. 30 year rafter, kayaker and professional whitewater guide, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 203 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I've been an avid river runner for over 30 years. I strongly urge you to allow recreational boating on the entire length of the Merced River through Yosemite National Park. The only condition I would add would be that alcohol should be prohibited while floating/paddling on the river. [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 204 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hello,

I'm writing to voice my opinion: Yosemite National Park (my favorite place on Earth) can improve opportunities for direct

connection to the values of the river by allowing paddling on the entire length of the Merced River. Resource values can be protected by managing high use stretches of the river through a permitting system, as is the case on so many pristine rivers throughout our great land. Please allow paddling on the Merced in the Valley...it seems unreasonable to prohibit this muscle-powered recreational opportunity in Yosemite Valley.

Respectfully,

High School Science Teacher

Correspondence ID: 205 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To whom it may concern,

Opening the entire length of the Merced River for paddling opportunities will allow Americans to experience freedom in an aquatic sense. Please consider opening the ENTIRE length of the river... While certain sections will get more use than others, and some are undesirable at certain levels, the river is a public resource, and should be available for all Americans to enjoy.

I was a part of opening Great Falls to paddling in the Great Falls National Park in Washington DC, and river recreationists are the ones that the park service is now teaming up with to help disseminate education, and help make the park safer for everyone to enjoy.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 206 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To Whom it Concerns:

My family and I live in Chico, CA and would LOVE the opportunity to paddle the Merced River through Yosemite National Park. Since "Yosemite" is the Public's park, I believe that the people should be able to enjoy the park from trails, motorized vehicles, bicycles AND boats. Please add my name and info to your list of public supporters for removing the ban on boating the Merced River in Yosemite.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 207 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I just wanted to say that on a recent trip to California, to visit some friends, we went to go rafting on the Merced. I was honestly quite bummed to find out that we couldn't float through the park, and could only drive though in order to see Yosemite. I think floating is more appropriate for a Wild and Scenic place rather than sitting in a car. We were all professional raft guides and know how to treat our rivers. A permit system could be set up like on the Grand Canyon to make sure those who are going down have the right equipment and knowledge to keep the place the way it is. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 208 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: The management plan for the Merced River Merced Wild and Scenic River within Yosemite National Park should permit non-powered boating throughout its length.

Paddling a river is a widely accepted way of experiencing other National Parks, Wilderness Areas, and federal lands across the country. It is a wilderness-compliant activity consistent with all other types of recreation allowed in the Park, including hiking, backpacking and rock-climbing. Paddlers tryly leave no trace, not even footprints, except at access points. Resource values can be protected by managing high use stretches of the river through a permitting system.

On my last visit to the park I was dissapointed that this and other rivers within the park were closed to responsible paddling. Please open the entire length of the Wild and Scenic Merced River within Yosemite NationalPark to canoes, kayaks and rafts.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 209 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: To whom it may be concerned, I have kayaked and canoed many rivers, lakes, and bay throughout southern California and can think of nothing better than cruising through Yosemite Valley with the towering cliffs and waterfalls on all sides. Especially human-powered craft likes canoes, rafts, and kayaks. Nothing is more inline with the ideas of nature than this. Please do everything in your power to make this possible. You could and probably would have a trial period to establish problem areas, etc. but I think you will find the river community to be very a very responsible one. Thanks you for your assistance. And SYOTR (See you on the River). If you want to contact me for any further follow up questions, etc., feel free to contact me anytime at:

Thanks again, [redacted]

Correspondence ID: 210 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Greetings-

I am writing to voice my support for whitewater access along the Merced River. The Merced meanders, tumbles and curves through a most beautiful place. Kayakers and other whitewater aficionados are some of the least 'intensive' pathfinders, as the river's 'trail' continually resurfaces, erasing the tracks of those who came before. Through conscientious stewardship there is no reason why whitewater enthusiasts would be anything but a benefit to a park system based on man's innate exploratory nature.

Sincere, kind regards,

Correspondence ID: 211 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hello Park Service Planners,

I have kayaked many sections of the Merced River during my almost 30 years of boating--from the Motels to Bagby and one memorable run in the park from, I think, Pohono Bridge to somewhere above the old powerhouse on an early spring day. It would be great to be able to boat through the park again, combining the awesome scenery with my favorite form of recreation--paddling. Please do what you can to make it happen.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Correspondence ID: 212 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please open all of the Merced and Tuolumne rivers (including Hetch Hetchy) to boating. This can be managed like it is so many other places. Lake Tahoe is used a water source, and people MOTOR boat on it, so why not have non-motorized boating on Hetch Hetchy?

Correspondence ID: 213 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I want to encourage the National Park Service to open up more of the Wild and Scenic Merced River, in Yosemite Valley, to access by individuals who want responsibly raft, kayak , canoe or tube more parts of this great river. I have for years enjoyed the beauty and experience of floating the short section of the Merced currently open to float trips, starting close to the bridge by Curry Village. It would be great to provide a wider range of river access to boat in. This National Park is a tremendous natural resource with so many unique areas. To experience, via a river, these wonders, is a wonderful experience. Again, I urge you to find ways to bring more rivers within Yosemite, greater access to the public who pay fees to enjoy Yosemite. Best Regards,

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Correspondence ID: 214 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Greetings Yosemite Planning - It would be such a long lasting memorable experience and deeply gratifying pleasure if private boating, of course with a permit, would be allowed on the lovely Merced River in the remarkable Yosemite National Park going forward. By establishing both Yosemite/Merced River day use permits and combining rafting/paddling with overnight camping

in designated camps multi day or extended use permits would be nothing less that greatly satisfying to countless visitors. The future opportunity for families to have their children and grandchildren experience the Park floating on the river is such a great idea that needs to be part of the park's recreational activities. It has always been a mystery to me that this type of recreation has not been allowed. Afterall, climbers get access to the incredible canyon walls. Hikers get access to all the wonderful and various destinations along trails and have the use of estalished back country huts.. Skiers get access to Badger Pass as well as gain access along the closed roads or on the valley floor and have specific cross country ski huts to stay at. Biking enthusiasts get to ride on the roads in the valley floor and elsewhere. Campers get access to the numerous sites within park boundaries on the Valley Floor and up in the Tuolumne Meadows. It only makes sense to have the river element be a natural resource for recreational enjoyment. It is my hope that Yosemite Planning will expand and enhance their programs to include paddling the Merced within Park Boundaries. Our large numbered extented family has had fulfilling experiences over these last 20 years to raft the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, the Snake River in the Tetons and Hells Canyon, the Green and Colorado through Cataract Canyon in Canyonlands, the Yampa through Dinosaur, the Escalante in the Grand Staircase plus so many more trips through our country's National Forests such as the Middle Salmon and Main Salmon, the Selway, Jarbidge-Bruneau rivers in Idaho., In California, we have enjoyed the Tuolumne and Merced outside of Yosemite, Forks of the Kern, the McCloud below Shasta, Deer Creek below Lasson, and really too many river trips to tell them all. Starting out as young adults to then include our children and now our grandchildren, boating is always a favorite trip long or short. Thank you this chance to voice my support for this endeavor and to encourage you to move in this direction and allow boating in another National Park: YOSEMITE!

Correspondence ID: 215 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: You allow access by foot, by horse and mule and yet paddling a boat through Yosemite has a smaller "footprint" than all those other means! There is no greater "Leave No Trace" method than floating a navigable river... I dare you to contest that fact! Moreover, boaters share in your desire to preserve our national treasures for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 216 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I cannot imagine a lower impact way to see this park. Large areas can be seen without walking on the vegetation. I saw it being done with inflatables on a show called Motion on the ABC Live Well Network and they said they saw almost no one!

Correspondence ID: 217 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Yosemite Park Service,

My family has frequented the park for many years, enjoyed the magic that the vistas offer and hiked extensively around including getting both of my daughters to summit Half Dome twice, as well as most other trails, Glacier point to the valley floor, upper Yosemite falls,and Mirror lake. I am a whitewater enthusiast and have always wanted to explore the valley from the river with my family. Please consider public use on the beautiful Wild and Scenic Merced river, camping riverside would be optimal, very little infrastructure would be needed to allow boaters access, all river trips are conducted with carry in/ carry out of all supplies and waste. I will be interested in all progress towards a river plan that allows boating on any river in your scope of management.

Thank you for your consideration

Correspondence ID: 218 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Folks, I am writing to encourage you to include boating in the Merced management plan. I'm too old to take advantage of it, but I've heard from many friends that the South Fork is one of the premier runs in the world.

Correspondence ID: 219 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please allow paddling the entire Merced. It is so beautiful and since I can't hike anymore, I would like to be able to float through Yosemite. Thanks,

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Correspondence ID: 220 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: hi there,

I would love to see paddling come to the merced. It is an amazing river and people deserve a chance to float down it. I am up in that area during the summer and would love another stretch of river to run.

thanks,

Correspondence ID: 221 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Hi, I'm an expert kayaker living in Seattle but originally from Crescent City, California. I spent a couple weeks in California this summer including a week in Yosemite. I had the privilege of floating the "legal" section of the Merced in the park. I was blown away by the experience. It is by far and away the best way to experience the majesty of the valley. No dodging cars, crowded sidewalks etc. I also paddled the Merced River putting in at the park boundary. While not ultra-classic, this is an enjoyable section of advanced whitewater. I also looked at some of the section in the park right upstream of the park. While dangerous, I would have run some of it if I had been allowed. There are surely more sections that would be worth checking out. I can never understand why kayaking is restricted in the National Park. The only reason I can think of it that tourists will see us and think it's safe to get in the water. I think this threat is over-hyped, though. This isn't a huge problem on rivers outside of the park and is something that education and awareness can help minimize. Kayaking is a pure, extremely low impact activity. Kayaking down a river is probably the lowest impact way to experience an area. You don't even leave footprints for the most part. The vast majority of whitewater kayakers are responsible and know how to make decisions that will ensure their own safety. Kayakers are some of the most capable and responsible wilderness users out there. Of course they need to be rescued occasionally, but I assure you we do everything we can for ourselves before asking for help. I would greatly appreciate some forward thinking from park management on this issue. Please allow kayaking on some/all of the the world-class whitewater that is within Yosemite. Get rid of archaic, unnecessary rules that only serve to restrict a legitimate use of a public resource. Thanks,

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Correspondence ID: 222 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: As a recreational enthusiast of California Rivers, I strongly endorse opening up the entire wild and scenic Merced River to whitewater boating in Yosemite National Park.

Thank You,

Correspondence ID: 223 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I support recreational boating on the entire length of the Merced Wild & Scenic River. there's no better way to get in touch with the nature of the river. the impacts of recreational boating of very low. In Georgia's Tallulah River, after initially using a permit system to limit impacts, the state parks department realized the impacts were minimal and opened access.

Correspondence ID: 224 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I have been a visitor to Yosemite for over 30 years and have enjoyed the river through the valley very much, but am distressed at the loss of access to the river for boaters like myself. I have rowed a raft down the Grand Canyon with a permit from the NPS, but cannot paddle my canoe from Upper Pines Campground to El Capitan Beach, ostensibly because of public safety, but if I want to climb the vertical faces there, I am free to do so. Please restore sensible access to the river.

Correspondence ID: 225 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,28,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I'm writing to support the inclusion of paddling along the entire length of the Merced River in the Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. I live in Lynchburg, VA and visited the park once in 2004 to backpack, camp, and climb Half Dome via the Snake Dike Route with my brother. I was very impressed with the Park but was very disappointed to learn that paddling was not allowed. Please give people an opportunity to fully experience all the Park has to offer by allowing paddling. Thanks.

Correspondence ID: 226 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -The lodge and east of there (in currently developed areas).

Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -Yes, I believe more 'public' transportation options would be great, although I might not use them when doing my primary activity (rock climbing).

Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -Because of how I use and enjoy the park (primarily rock climbing), it would be difficult to structure it around the gear and time requirements of my activity.

If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -I'd worry about people holding, hoarding, or scalping reservations.

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? -My use is frequently day-use, I'd be worried about limitions on my use (I spend a lot of time in the valley and love it tremendously).

How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -I think it's best to add camping east of the lodge (or near there), without spreading further west - it would allow us to keep the west relatively undeveloped which is very attractive.

9A, 10C, 12B, 14B, 15A, 16A, 19A (as long as it doesn't encroach too closely on all the existing climbing and bouldering at the swan slabs area), 20A, 21A (effectively encouraging primary use and impact on developed pathway structures, while still allowing people to relax and stroll into the meadow as desired - there's a HUGE history of climbers using the meadow for such activity), 23D (please no new camping west of near the lodge as to keep areas west more wild and less developed)

For meadows, creative use of boardwalks will encourage most users to minimize impact, while allowing others to stroll further if desired. It's important to give queues which help mitigate the bulk of the impact, while continuing to allow some of the treasured usages (eg. hanging out in El Cap meadows).

Develop responsible campgrounds east of near yosemite lodge to keep development in the east end of the valley (while leaving west more raw and undeveloped). Separate car camping, walkin camping, and rv camping to improve user experience.

Simple changes (traffic circles, pedestrian underpasses, etc) at the village and lodge-lower falls crossing could have a dramatic impact on traffic and during peak season (which can really suck). I prefer underpasses as they're less of a visual impact in the natural environment than overpasses. Force construction crews to close only short stretches of road for construction (currently closures of long stretches of road delay traffic unnecessarily).

Balance. Preservation where possible, expansion of camping while maintaining concentration of camping and development, talking simple steps to overcome obvious problems.

Correspondence ID: 227 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -The Lodge and east of there. The west part of the Valley is not developed and it is nice to have part of the Valley untouched from development.

Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -Yes, although I might not use them for rock climbing, but for hiking, it would be ok. Bridalveil could be a good stop.

Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -For rock climbing and gear requirements it would be hard to utilize them.

If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -If the issue of permit hoarding (individuals buying lots at one time) were addressed. A system that allowed you to reserve day of, at 6am or something, would be much more fair. The Stone Fort in Chattanooga has this and it allows for limits, but fairly.

What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? -Rock climbing, parking is needed.

How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -Keep camping from the Lodge east. It is important to have part of the valley untouched from development and keeping the west end of the valley that way is important - no smoke, noise, etc.

9A, 10C, 12B, 14B, 15A, 16A, 19A (as long as it doesn't encroach on the existing climbing near the footpath and to the swan slabs area - keep it more towards the road, not north towards the trail), 20A, 21A (west of the triangle, put foot paths for the first 100 - 200 feet, then allow social trails. At the triangle, perhaps a similar structure, but it is important to let people relax and be in the meadow. Extending the boardwalks would keep the majority of the visitors on them, while allowing others to venture further), 23D (please keep development east of the lodge and up valley, the west end of the Valley is not developed and it is important to have part of the Valley that way - no campground smoke, noise, etc)

Being creative with boardwalks. In El Cap meadow it is important to maintain the history of the meadow for climbers - lie in all day, look at El Cap, watch friends on the wall, etc. However, using parts of boardwalks to mitigate the majority of visitors to just walking out and "glancing" at El Cap would help. Perhaps extending them 100 ft or so. In other meadows, where there isn't as much need for social trails, boardwalks are a great idea.

Develop responsible campgrounds that protect the river cooridor in the east end of the Valley (keep from the Lodge West wild and undeveloped - ie no campground smoke, noise, etc). Educate visitors on impacts. Also, designate RV/Car/Walk in campgrounds. Some visitors prefer not to "camp" next to a large RV with a generator going.

Pedestrian undercrossings are a great way to help the traffic problems at the Lower Falls/Lodge crossing and at the Village. This would help with traffic tremendously. Underpasses are preferable to overpasses as it impedes less on the view and is less obstructing. Limit construction crews to minimally close lengths of roads, unlike current practices where unecessary lenghts are shut down.

Balance. Concentrating development in one part of the Valley while using conservation to preserve Yosemite for all future generations. Keeping part of the Valley untouched is magical and allows people to get "lost" in nature. While having development in another part allows people to "settle in" - it's a great balance, and hope that it can be kept.

Correspondence ID: 228 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: ? How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function? -Remove obstructions when possible. Transforming Sugar Pine Bridge into a foot bridge is a good idea.

? How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -Remove Housekeeping Camp and all NPS campsites that are too close to the river. Do not replace Housekeeping Camp beds. Use boardwalks in valley meadows and reveg social trails.

? Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration? -Eroded river bank areas throughout the valley. Trails running through wilderness meadows should be rerouted as soon as possible, especially those in the High Sierra Camp loop.

? How can we conserve our limited water supply? -Eliminate flushing toilets for visitors and convert to pit/composting toilets. Educate employees on conservation techniques. Install low flow-shower heads in employee housing and in visitor showers.

? What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality? -Remove facilities that are too close to the river. Reduce trail head quotas for Half Dome/Merced Lake HSC. Piles of unburied human feces, used toilet paper, and trash are common on those trails.

? What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources? -Block off sensitive areas. Try to recapture lost data immediately. Remove tourist activity in sensitive areas. No more development beyond what is needed for serious restoration (boardwalks, etc).

? How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? -Stop trying to turn Yosemite into Disneyland. Scale back DNC visitor services dramatically and emphasize the rustic and simple. Swimming, biking riding, hiking, walking, photography, etc.

? If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -Could current parking areas be redelineated to make more room? No new development in the valley. Any new parking has to be remote.

? Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -Yes, bus services should be supported. I already use the existing bus services and will continue to do so.

? Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -Yes. We have to reduce the number of cars in the park overall. Day users should not be driving into Yosemite at all.

? If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -This is an idea worth trying out for sure.

? 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? -A reservation system might be a better way to go to avoid huge lines of cars trying to get a permit at the entrance stations.

? What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? -Swimming, hiking, backpacking, stock use, bike riding, walking, primitive camping, restricted floating/paddling, rock climbing.

? How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? -The NPS needs to look at reducing visitation as a means of protecting the ORVs. Remove Housekeeping Camp, Merced HSC, and the Half Dome cables. Scale back visitor services from DNC considerably.

? How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -No increase in camping. We should be focused on restoration and not development. More camping means more utilities, more water usage, more people, etc.

? What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor? -NPS administrative building, visitor center, Ansel Adams gallery, post office, village store, medical clinic, and some food service is necessary. Get rid of most Curry Village services.

? How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley? -Let people Telecommute and find office space in Mariposa/Oakhurst. Many NPS employees can work remotely and would probably be more effective that way.

? How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met? -Use native materials to block off unwanted parking areas, delineate river access points, place boardwalks in disturbed meadows, fence/block off arch sites and restoration areas. Point people in the direction you want them to go!

Remove disruptive structures, like Housekeeping Camp and NPS campsites that are too close to the water. The Sugar Pine Bridge can be replaced with a less obstructive foot bridge. Do not develop more campgrounds. Instead, restore flood plain areas and allow them to heal naturally. Reroute wilderness trails out of meadow areas. Reduce trail head quotas.

Place the focus on the land and the natural processes that shape it. We need more educational services with regard to the true human history of Yosemite (treatment of Native Americans, buffalo soldiers, changes within the NPS that got us this far). Reduce visitor services from DNC down to only what is necessary and place the emphasis on Yosemite. People can buy overpriced novelties elsewhere.

Rustic and simple activities need to be emphasized as high-quality, resource-related experiences. Push swimming, real backpacking, real hiking, bike riding, rock climbing, photography walks, etc. Reduce visitor services from DNC (Village Grill, most Curry Village amenities, Yosemite Lodge bar, Green Gift Shop). Removing high sierra camps would be an excellent move, because hiking to one of those monstrosities is not a wilderness experience!

Appropriate development would include structures that are necessary for the restoration process, like installing boardwalks over damaged meadow areas. Remote parking lots outside of the park boundary may be okay, but it will all depend upon placement. One map showed the Abbieville and Trailer Court area as being considered for camping and parking. Why are we displacing employees to accommodate tourists? Also, why are we even considering further development in a flood plain?

The commonality among my choices are no more new development and a rollback on the development that has already occurred. I believe that by reducing certain unnecessary visitor services, both in the front country and wilderness, the NPS can create an improved visitor experience and improve working conditions for many NPS employees. Do we really need two sports shops, two pizza joints, a taqueria, a green gift shop, a bar at Yosemite Lodge, high sierra camps, the Village Grill, and the blatant eye sore that is Housekeeping Camp? Yes, removing these services and reducing trail head quotas will put off a certain "type" of Yosemite visitor, and that is perfectly fine. Those looking for a Disneyland experience will move on. The NPS needs to be pushing a much more natural and educational visitor experience, because Yosemite does not exist to help DNC or any other park partner turn a profit. Reducing visitor services may help reduce visitation in impacted areas naturally.

Correspondence ID: 229 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: In the summer of 2010 I hiked up the Merced River from Nevada Falls. In the summer of 2011, I hike to the Volgesang High Sierra Camp, and then on to Emeric Lake. In the summer of 2007, I hiked the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne and past Glen Aulin Camp.

As a backpacker, I am concerned about the human and equine pollution from the High Sierra Camps. The trails to the camps were badly worn from overuse by people and horses. The national park is supposed to be a preserve, and having these ugly commercial camps takes away from the beauty and purpose of the park. I am in favor of the removal of these camps. The

spoiling of Yosemite Valley can't be reversed, but that is not true of the camps. All four should be phased out.

I am also concerned with the pollution and damage caused by the horses from the packstation in the valley. Their excrement is obnoxious and constantly present on the trails. They are not native to the park. Their size and numbers cause serious erosion on the hiking trails, and make them difficult to traverse. I would like to see the packstation phased out of the park.

The owners of both the packstation and the HSCs make a lot of money from the concessions. I don't belief that big profits should be made for private owners from our national parks.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 230 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -Additional parking should be out of the park.

Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -Yes, I support them and would use them, because as it currently stands the masses of cars in the Valley take away from the experience of this incredible place.

Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -Yes, for the same reasons above.

If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -Since the reservation system for climbing Half Dome and camping are being hacked and sold for outrageous prices, another reservation system should be avoided.

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? -No, more permits equal more hassles and paper work. Just keep the RV's and cars out of the Valley.

What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? -Walking, biking, along desinated paths. What currently ruins the experience is the amount of car noise.

How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? -All visitors should park outside of the Park and use a shuttle to bring them into the Valley, where they could walk, bike ,or backpack.

How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -Povide camping OUTSIDE of the park.

Do not develop new camp sites within the Valley, but increase sites outside of the Valley. Remove camp sites which are within the high water mark and in Riparian zones. Provide river access in resilient areas and restore riparian areas to their natural condition. Relocate visitor use to protect plant populations which are ethnografic resources. Replace Suger Pine and Ahwahnee Bridges with foot bridges thereby protecting the free flowing of the River. Remove all lodging units, infrastructure and restore to natural conditions. Fully restore the floodplain and riparian areas at the Upper and Lower River Campgrounds. Remove social trails and restore meadows. Install boardwalks to protect meadows. Remove Swinging Bridge Picnic area and restore riparian environment. Enlarge picnic areas at Cathedral and Sentinel Beaches. Desinate foot paths and bike lanes as ways to control use in sensitive ares.

Greenmeyer Sandpit- Restore to natural condition, remove fill material and recontour.

Remove all facilities and restore understory.

Relocate parking from the water's edge.

Close Merced Lake HSC and restore to natural condition which will reduce stock and foot traffic.

Limit or close Merced Lake to camping, and make it Day Use only. (I have spent many years in the back country, and it is rewarding to camp out of the area, and visit the lake as a day use area, returning to my more remote camp at night).

Reduce trailhead quota to the Merced Lake area.

Reduce trailhead quota to Little Yosemite Valley. If possible, retain compost toilet to address the Day Users that come through

this area every day.

Wawona Campground- Relocate campsites that are close to the river.

Allow floating and paddling to continue with no removal of woody debris. Provide designated put-in and take-out spots.

Relocate picnic area to a different location and designate river access in this area.

Let the river return to its natural condition. Remove bridges, roads, etc that hinder its flowing. Restore the floodplain and meadows and restrict automobile traffic.

People can not experience and develop meaningfull connections with the Merced River when the sound of traffic is constantly bombarding them, and the shores are trampled. Keeping out the cars would increase visitor appreciation, as would resticted access to the river by way of foot and bike paths. Quieting the Valley would enhance everyone's appreciation.

If everyone (including staff) had to park in a staging area outside of the Park and be shuttled in to walk, bike or backpack, the parkwould be better protected, and the experience of all inhanced.

All structures and development should be geared to restrict public trampling, and aid in the education of this wonderful resource.

The commonality of my choices is to remove traffic, camp grounds, and infrastructure from this incredible place. People should be able to experience the Valley as a Day Use area , not a place to live and thereby trample. Instead of experiencing the congestion, the noise, and the city-like ambiance, a restored Yosemite could be a true refuge for cultural association, education,reflection and inspiration.

Correspondence ID: 231 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: #9: 9B Ideas: -We need more walk-in camping -We need more drop-in camping (i.e, no reservations needed) -Improve on Camp 4: some improvements were promised and have yet to be developed. Need more sites in this area so people are not camping so close to each other and creating a party atmosphere.

#21: 21B Thoughts: -Visitors and climbers enjoy stopping at El Cap Meadow for the views of El Cap. It has become a cultural experience for all user groups. We need to have access to parking along the road for quick stops. It would be a shame to see this limited to only emergency vehicles. -Manage vegetation by designating trails and providing viewing platforms.

Thoughts in General for the entire Yosemite Area: -There is no reason to go further west than Eagle Creek for more camping access/development. -We need more walk-in camping sites (a la Camp 4) -We need improvements to Camp 4: restrooms and more sites so it's not so densely crowded. -Increase camping in the Valley -Decrease lodging and concessions -Provide adequate parking -Preserve climbing access trails for climbers: Cathedrals, El Cap etc.

#1: replace horses with human porters who live in/near Yosemite during the summers.

Due to lack of parking, it is impossible to create a parkwide bus system. THus, create adequate parking. But do so by preserving and allowing access at climbing trailheads.

Bring back camping in the old Rivers area. Add walk-in camping in the Sables area & Upper Pines. Tap into existing infrastructure so as not to have to disturb new areas for campsite development. Add more sites to Upper Pines.

In general, the Valley needs more camping that is accessible as drop-in. The reservation system is unweildy and makes it impossible for local bay area folks to visit for a weekend.

Take away some of the concessions and lodging and bring back the remote feel of the valley.

Correspondence ID: 232 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: December 13, 2011 To Whom It May Concern: I am writing to comment on the Merced River Planning Workbook. With any future planning of the sierra parks, there are opportunities to improve the policies that are designed to protect heavily visited Merced River corridor.

My particular area of concern is equine and pack-stock related use of the Yosemite Valley and nearby high sierra camps. My personal experience, gathered after numerous visits to the area, is that pack animals do nothing but degrade the visitor experience, and beyond the visible damage there is significant water pollution and waste generation that is a direct cause of the pack animals and groups associated with them. In my travels through many parts of the Sierra, including the Valley, it is common to know you're on a trail used by pack trains by the deep powder that is the trail surface. The hooves of the horses and burros have ground the native soil to dust, which makes summer hiking less of a pristine experience and more of a respiratory hazard. Additionally the damage is not limited to the ground and even granite, but tree roots as well are usually frayed, scarred and cut. Piles of excrement and the attendant wasps and flies also are signatures of these trails, which washes with the pulverized soil into our Sierra waterways. In the big picture of the Sierra Nevada, the high sierra camps (run by commercial outfitters) are the natural cause of most of this equine traffic. The consequences of these camps are well known, and even a quarter-century ago were recognized enough so that Congress authorized their removal. The quasi-luxury experience that these commercial outfits seek to provide is completely out of character with the remote alpine nature of the park, and in order to provide such amenities, there must be constant mule traffic of loaded pack trains. Everyone (not just the paying clientele) must endure the resultant conditions that certainly do nothing to improve the wilderness experience that most citizens seek. As just one additional example, I have been simply run off the trail by such a supply train that somehow feels they have the right-of-way over any other users of the trail. With any chance to modify the Merced River Plan, please consider provisions that move toward limiting horse and pack traffic in these fragile areas. Commercial stables at Yosemite Valley should be phased out, and the various high sierra camps at Vogelsang, May Lake and others should be closed and removed. Future and present users of the park will get to experience more of the real Sierra Nevada, and the Park Service will be closer to really protecting the area in its charge. Sincerely,

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Correspondence ID: 233 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Access Fund Recreational Groups
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: December 14, 2011

Superintendent Yosemite National Park Attn: Merced River Plan Alternatives P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389 Email: yose_planning@nps.gov

RE: Access Fund Comments to the Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook

Dear Yosemite Planning Team: The Access Fund welcomes the opportunity to submit these comments on the National Park Service's (NPS) Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook ("MRP 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). These comments are provided in addition to the scoping comments we submitted in 2010.1 The Access Fund applauds the work that Yosemite planners put into this excellent and informative workbook, and the extraordinary efforts that the Park has committed to public outreach during the Merced Wild and Scenic River planning process such as webinars and public meetings.

The Access Fund The Access Fund is the only national advocacy organization whose mission keeps climbing areas open and conserves the climbing environment. 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,2 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 alternatives presented in the MRP Planning Workbook. Our comments are numbered to match the numbered issues outlined in the Workbook:

Valley Camping Demand: Issues 9, 12, 14, 19, and 23 Restore an Appropriate Ratio of Camping v. Lodging The MRP should reverse the lodging/camping ratio in the Valley (currently about 60/40) to provide more camping and phase out developed lodging by moving lodging to the Park's boundaries. Providing more camping in the Park, and limiting lodging in the Park to rustic/primitive accommodations, recognizes that camping is a form of recreation, and that recreation is recognized in the Plan as an ORV. By contrast, lodging is the consumption of commercialized personal services and is a form of leisure which is not recognized as an ORV in the MRP. This change is also consistent with the NPS's own management policies which encourage forms of recreation that promote a direct relationship to Park resources. Changing this 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. The MRP should also focus on improving the quality of the camping experience, which is characterized by crowded sites, antiquated restrooms, mixed RV and tent sites, lack of fencing and vegetation, widespread soil compaction and denuded areas, poorly defined tent sites, and crumbling roadways. For more detail on these proposals, please see the Access Fund's Valley Plan comments.

Future Camping Locations 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 that were damaged in the 1997 flood. These areas in particular could be engineered with the recognition that they will again be flooded. Also, to assist MRP planners in assessing sites in the flood plain, maps should indicate flood plain areas where shallow flood depths and low water velocities make the development

of campsites feasible. The use of walk-in sites'which allow parking, toilets and other core infrastructure to be concentrated away from dispersed campsites'could assist in minimizing impacts to riparian values. 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. Thus, if the MRP limits the number of sites in the Rivers Campground in favor of riparian values, for example, planners should seek to locate additional camping in sites now occupied by developed lodging rather than reducing the quantity and quality of camping opportunities. In addition to the Rivers Area and the Pine and Oak area, other potential locations identified in the Workbook for possible camping, and other areas 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 ? The West of Lodge area and East of Camp 4 areas, and ? The Pine and Oak area

Another possibility for additional camping is to close off the road between The Stables and the Mirror Lake Trailhead (which would become a bus turnaround) and turn the area along this road and the lower north slope of the Medial Moraine into a walk-in camping area, with parking at The Stables. The Access Fund opposes new campsites developed in the West Yosemite Valley Area (i.e. Eagle Creek, Taft Toe, and West of El Cap Meadow) to avoid new development, noise, and congestion in this largely undisturbed part of the Valley. The MRP should also establish a diversity of camping opportunities including: 1) walk-in, 2) walk-to, and 3) options where campers "drop-off" their gear, park, and walk-in to their campsites) and not just limit opportunities to drive-in campgrounds which are space-consumptive, noisy, and inappropriately mix RVs and tent campers. The MRP should bring campsite numbers at least back to pre-flood totals as contemplated in Yosemite's General Management Plan (there's currently a shortfall of 300 campsites). The Access Fund has long advocated for the addition of camping in the Park outside of Yosemite Valley,4 particularly at Foresta, and we urge MRP planners to incorporate expanded camping opportunities out of the Valley into the plans for the MRP corridor. Retain the "Improvements" to Camp 4 from the Lodge Redevelopment Plan Park planners should also include in the MRP the several "improvements" for Camp 4 that were contemplated in the Lodge Redevelopment Plan5 (which was stalled by the MRP litigation). These improvements include showers and updated bathrooms, fencing to encourage revegetation and limit loud bus noise, a foul weather cooking pavilion and communal fireplace, more separation from parking areas to reduce noise especially from buses, and a nearby location for Ken Yager's Yosemite Climbing Museum. Thought should also be given to ways to improve the quality of the camping experience in Camp 4, which is intensely crowded throughout the summer season. 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. Planners should recognize the historic importance of this campground and improve some of the basic amenities such as the bathrooms.

El Cap Meadow and Informal Social Trails: Issue 21 El Cap Meadow is one of the most remarkable locations in Yosemite Valley, especially for climbers. In order to safely and successfully climb El Capitan, it is necessary to undergo extensive preparation. In addition to packing food, water, and gear for an ascent up El Capitan, it is critical that climbers familiarize themselves with the route they intend to climb, and the features on that route, especially those visible from the ground. This is because climbing a wall of El Cap's magnitude almost always presents significant challenges with route finding. Accordingly, would-be El Cap climbers often spend hours, and in some cases, days, studying the features on El Cap through a telescope or binoculars in order to ensure adequate familiarity with their intended climb to avoid "getting off route" and getting a sense of scale. El Cap Meadow also serves 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.

El Cap Meadow, particularly the east end of the meadow, is the ideal location for scouting climbing routes. MRP planners should ensure that measures to restore or harden El Cap Meadow do not unreasonably limit or prohibit climbers' access to this incredible and indispensable resource. Also, because El Cap Meadow lies at the center of the viewshed from virtually every climbing route on El Cap and other features in the west end of the Valley, planners should ensure that restoration or hardening measures are not unsightly from above. The MRP should consider a hybrid approach for a boardwalk further west of typical climber use areas, and use fencing and other ways to focus people onto a few discrete paths into the Meadow. It is critical the MRP allows climbers their traditional, low impact use of the Meadow.

River Access West of Pohono Bridge: Issue 22 The Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas, including Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed's Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, and others. Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to reduce impacts.

High Visitor Use/River Banks Impacts at Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds: Issue 7 The only two options provided in the MRP Workbook to reduce river bank impacts at the Upper and Lower Pines Campgrounds are to eliminate or relocate campsites that are near the river. We believe that before these options are considered, efforts should first be made to fence and sign the areas of the riverbank to be protected, as has been done at Devil's Elbow, and then design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

Parking, Transportation, Noise, and Inappropriate "Amusement Park" Attractions

The Park should ensure climbing needs are addressed in the MRP, particularly parking locations throughout the Valley and the Merced Gorge segments (Cookie Cliff, Arch Rock, etc.). Where appropriate, roadside parking should be paved to reduce impacts and moved off the shoulder to improve safety.

Park planners should ensure that there is adequate day use parking while pursuing a range of transit strategies to reduce auto use

in the Valley. The Access Fund also supports:

o The expansion of transit opportunities to and in the Valley, and better information at and before entrances regarding parking and traffic conditions in the Valley. o More access options to lesser attractions in the Park and surrounding area rather than regulatory solutions such as day-use reservations, parking permits and closures. o Park-and-ride facilities outside the park but do not support them at the Taft Toe area because of new impacts caused to this largely undisturbed area. o All reasonable day-use parking facilities should be developed or improved in the Valley, including Camp 6, Curry Village, and the wilderness parking lot. o Peak season day use should be managed to reduce the number of autos circulating in search of parking. o Non-resource based attractions and high-impact commercial amusements such as swimming pools, the skating rink, and horseback rides to Mirror Lake should be phased out. o The Plan should include a noise control element that addresses noise sources such as idling tour buses, motorcycles, trash collection, RV generators, the Green Dragon touring flatbeds and others.

CONCLUSION The Access Fund hopes these comments assist Yosemite planners to in identifying planning issues in the MRP that are important to the climbing community. The Merced River Plan provides an opportunity to manage the increasing urbanization of the Yosemite Valley, including reducing luxury accommodations in favor of campsites and addressing problematic noise pollution, and the Plan must allow for access to Park areas 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 303-325-5936 or Jason@accessfund.org.

Sincerely, Jason Keith Access Fund Policy Director

Cc: Brady Robinson, Access Fund Executive Director Paul Minault, Access Fund Regional Coordinator Phil Powers, American Alpine Club Executive Director Linda McMillan, American Alpine Club Mike Gauthier, Yosemite National Park Chief of Staff Mark Fincher, Yosemite National Park Climbing Program Manager Jesse McGahey, Yosemite National Park Climbing Ranger Ken Yager, Yosemite Climbing Association Chris McNamara, Supertopo

1 See http://www.accessfund.org/atf/cf/%7B1F5726D5-6646-4050-AA6E-C275DF6CA8E3%7D/Access%20Fund%20Scoping%20Comments%20to%20Merced%20WSR%20Plan.pdf.

2 In the 1990s the Access Fund participated in the development of a draft climbing management plan and built a climbers' trail to the Sunnyside Bench area in the Valley, and in 2005 we provided grant funding for bear boxes placed at strategic locations in Yosemite Valley to serve the needs of big wall climbers who lack food storage while they are on overnight climbs. The Access Fund submitted extensive comments on the Valley Plan in 2000, the Yosemite Falls Plan in 2001, the Yosemite Lodge Redevelopment Plan and Valley Implementation Plan in 2003, and earlier efforts on a Merced River Plan. The Access Fund also testified at a 2003 congressional field hearing in Yosemite National Park regarding the Park Wide Out-Of-Valley Campgrounds Study, and provided lengthy informal input regarding a climbing management plan for Yosemite Valley and a redesign project for Camp 4. We also provided scoping comments to the Tuolumne River and Meadows Plan. In 2009, we awarded a grant to Yosemite National Park for the creation and printing of a brochure for climbers visiting Yosemite. In partnership with the Yosemite Climbing Association, the American Alpine Club, Friends of YOSAR, and the Yosemite Mountaineering School, the Access Fund also helped produce this brochure which includes guidance for low-impact climbing and camping, safety information, maps, and descriptions of various climbing opportunities in the Park. Finally, the Access Fund is proud to annually support the Yosemite Climbing Association's "Yosemite Facelift" scheduled every year at the end of September. See out extensive library of Yosemite comments at http://www.accessfund.org/site/c.tmL5KhNWLrH/b.5050525/k.11DB/Position_statements.htm.

3 See http://www.accessfund.org/atf/cf/%7B1F5726D5-6646-4050-AA6E-C275DF6CA8E3%7D/CA--Yosemite%20Valley_4.22.2003.pdf.

4 See http://www.accessfund.org/atf/cf/%7B1f5726d5-6646-4050-aa6e-c275df6ca8e3%7D/ca__yosemite%20campgrounds_15_4.16.2003.pdf .

5 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: 234 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: More primitive camping in the west end of the Valley. How about refurbishing the old group camp in Foresta? Great view and quiet location. Isn't that what people come here for?

The High Sierra Camps need to use much less water. Flying sewage out in 55 gallon drums by helicopter at taxpayer expense is ridiculous. No flush toilets in the backcountry!

Housing should be rebuilt at the old Motor Inn site. Old El Portal should remain a residential area with no new offices build.

Any new office space needed should be built at the warehouse or Rancheria Flat.

No housing should be built adjacent to the Community Hall, as residential use so close will greatly conflict with community events.

Any new employee units should be built between Old El Portal and Rancheria, or at Rancheria Flat.

Please bear in mind that there are only 2 maintenance workers currently employed to service existing buildings in El Portal. Instead of building new structures the funds would be better spent on hiring more people to take care of what is already here.

Yes the fire station needs to be moved awayf rom speed bumps!!!

Building new structures at the trailer court is crazy. Too clsoe to the river. There is a huge need for low income housing here. How about use the trailer court as intended, but with trailers that could be diriven off if need be during high water events?

Correspondence ID: 235 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration? -Ahwahnee Meadow, El Cap Meadow, Lower/Upper Pines.

How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -Build boardwalkds. Designate areas.

How can we conserve our limited water supply? -Convert all toilets to new efficient ones. Change the faucet knobs to that you only push them in.

How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? -People will still experience the river the same way whether they are at the [un-readable] or at the designated area.

If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -DO NOT EXPAND PARKING IN YOSEMITE! It's crowded already. maybe reorganize your lots.

Would you support bush services along new routes into the park? if there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -I would support bus services if it reduced teh amount of cars in teh Valley, but i am not sure how effective that would be.

If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -No. That would not make sense; since Yosemite is strapped for cash.

Would you support the use of a day use parking/vehicle permit? -I would not sue it since I am a climber and need my car to carry my gear from location to location. I would support it though.

What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? -Water play, some floating.

How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -I don't think you can, unless you severly limit river access.

Limit the amount of foot traffic near the river. Especially where the soil is soft.

Limit access/make designated areas for people to visit the river. Have a station where people can learn about the river.

Limit beach access points. Estabish guided tours. Don't allow a lot of floation devices in the water.

Build platforms!! Limit access!!

My vision is a less crowded Yosemite Vally. I come to the Valley every weekend to climb and my favorite times are when its not crowded. Expanding camping is going to bring in many people. More people in the valley means more destruction. "You" want to rehabilitate the Merced yet you also want to bring more people in, it doesn't make sense. Maybe develope a way to advertise the importance of the Merced to new tourist.

Correspondence ID: 236 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: 12/14/2011

Merced River Plan Comments

Segment 4: El Portal 27: Infrastructure: Valley Oaks Impacts I do not feel that most existing infrastructure should be removed from this area, yet some "temporary" structures such as the fiscal office should be relocated. Also, if there are solutions to restoring the drainage issues that are currently altered by roads and buildings, this would increase the natural flows and overflows of water in the area. I believe that there are ways to encourage new seedlings within the area even with the current infrastructure that is there ? protecting emerging trees with fencing etc? I am vehemently opposed, however, to increasing development in that area as shown on the "Old El Portal Concepts" map.

My biggest concern in this area is related to the maps that were shown at the meeting and distributed separately from the booklet which give options for heavy proposed development right in this area of concern. I do not quite understand how any of the proposed development in that area relates to the Merced River Plans goals of the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural river values. Maybe these maps are not part of the scoping of this plan, I am not sure, but they are concerning enough to me to address at this point.

There is discussion of removal of existing structures in the area of the Valley Oaks, yet most of the proposed construction showing on the maps of the "Old El Portal Concepts" is within the area designated as this biological ORV. Both options A2 and B2 show townhouses right in the middle of the most open part of the grove. How does this enhance this ORV? In addition, it would take away needed parking for the NPS office that is currently using the parking there and for any community hall events (especially needed if the hall expands)!

Options A1 and B3 show major construction also within the boundary of the grove shown on the map of segment 4 #27 right by or in the critical wetland there. The 48 potential new residents in that area or large office space plus cars and parking lot will inevitably have a huge impact both on the wetland there and on the greatly increased use of the river areas nearby, not to mention the changed viewscape from the river. How is this protecting and enhancing the river? It also looks like the parking lot that is currently there near the YARTS stop is no longer there. Where will people park for events at the hall, park and ride etc??

Option A4 and B4 also put another office across the road where the "temporary" office currently is ? again, right next to the wetland and within the bounds of the Oak Grove. Does the fiscal office need to be in El Portal at all?

This is the question that I would like really suggest be looked into in more depth. Which offices TRULY need to be in Yosemite Valley and El Portal, and which could be more conveniently located in Mariposa. I know that a lot of offices have been moved from Yosemite to El Portal to get them out of the Valley, but, as is becoming clear in trying to make room for more in El Portal, there is just not room without impacting biological or cultural resources. Although I am not an expert in this area, I imagine that there are a lot of people who drive here form Mariposa every day to work in an office and rarely NEED to be in El Portal or Yosemite. These commuters are heavily impacting the Wild and Scenic River by driving up and down the corridor between Mariposa and Yosemite every day. On the occasions that these people need to be in the Park (once a week ? once a month?) they could then drive up or take a bus, thus drastically reducing the daily driving. This would open up more office space in El Portal to put the people who do need to be here so that we do not need to then build ADDITIONAL office space in our Valley Oak ORV or our wetland.

In fact, I would say that the excessive driving up and down the corridor has the most impact on the Wild and Scenic River of anything and so much of that is due to commuters. Does moving housing of the people who work daily in Yosemite from Yosemite Valley to El Portal really enhance the river when these people will then be driving daily up the river corridor? Keep those that need to be in the park every day either in the park or El Portal, and move ALL others to Mariposa where they can find housing and lesson their commute and help our local small town to thrive.

(This also addresses the parking issue in the Valley) In addition, a more frequent, smaller, less polluting public transportation system that really works for people could make a huge impact on the amount of cars going up and down the canyon. As a resident of El Portal, I try to use YARTS for myself and my children when I can (both to go to Mariposa and Yosemite Valley), unfortunately, there are no runs in the evening in the winter that come up to EP or the Valley from Mariposa. There often are not busses that get people up to the Valley early enough to start work or late enough to work late and get home. I think that people would use public transportation more often if it was more frequent, but maybe a big van or smaller bus would be sufficient. Maybe it is worth subsidizing something like this rather than all of the money it would take to create more parking in the Valley which really shouldn't have more parking. This could also bring park visitors up from Mariposa and El Portal. Maybe some sort of parking permit system as mentioned earlier could then force people to use this system ? allowing only overnight guests, perhaps, to park in the Valley)

Another way to decrease infrastructure in the Valley would be to move concessionaire products such as gift shops out of the Valley and to Mariposa, Groveland and Oakhurst. Why are we selling knick knacks in Yosemite Valley and housing people to sell those knick knacks and driving them up the river corridor when they could all be sold outside of the park? I can understand food and a few basic necessities being sold there, but any "gift/souvenir" items do not belong in Yosemite Valley where space is at such a premium.

The reason that I am mentioning all of this here and relating it to the MRP is that if we do this, it might help to address some of

the other issues brought up in this scoping such as the extra office space and housing in El Portal that could become unnecessary if we creatively move more people to Mariposa. The search for housing, camping, parking etc? that is all brought up in the Yosemite Valley sections of the plan could also begin to be addressed by freeing up some of that in moving retail and the workers associated with it out of the valley. Why do we have stores (many of them!) selling souvenir junk in one of the most sacred and beautiful places in the world? Mariposa would love to have that business and it simply does not belong in Yosemite Valley. Let's find a creative way to make that happen and then free up that space for some of our other needs in moving parking etc? away from the river corridor in the Valley.

The "Trailer Court Concepts" map for Old El Portal also seems to go against preserving and protecting river values as the trailer court is right on the river. Housing was moved out of there, presumably for being in the flood plain and now new housing and possibly camping is proposed there where at the same time we are talking about eliminating camping by the river elsewhere. I definitely don't see a need for a parking lot there as, if people are getting on a bus to come to Yosemite from Mariposa or Midpines anyway, why are we encouraging them to drive up the river canyon from Mariposa to then get on a bus when they could just as easily get on the bus in Mariposa and then eliminate many cars from the beautiful and dangerous canyon. Those that are staying in El Portal would already have a place to park at the hotel, so I find building a parking lot on the river's edge unnecessary and highly impactful to the river values.

Segment 1: #2 5B ? Retain Backpackers' campground

It is there already and it is helping to concentrate and minimize the impact?

Correspondence ID: 237 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: American Alpine Club Recreational Groups
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Yosemite Planning Team; The American Alpine Club welcomes the opportunity to comment on the National Park Service's (NPS) Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook ("the workbook"). We are thankful to the Yosemite planners for the work they have put into the workbook. Public outreach has been high quality and builds on the tradition of great relations between Yosemite National Park and the climbing public and between Yosemite National Park and the AAC. COMMENTS The following comments are our suggestions on the issues identified in the workbook. However, we want to be clear that our overarching concern is the need for the expansion of Camp 4 and the improvement of its bathroom facilities. Camping Needs: Issues 9, 12, 14, 19, and 23 The Merced River Plan (MRP) should improve the availability of camping in the Valley. Lodging, activities not unique to the Park like swimming pools, and incidental services like banking can be moved nearer to or outside Park boundaries. Providing more camping in the Park would be consistent with and supportive of recreation (recreation is recognized in the workbook as an Outstandingly Remarkable Value). Walk-in Sites The use of walk-in sites that concentrate parking, rubbish collections facilities, and bathrooms can maintain riparian values while meeting the needs of recreationists. The Park simply must improve the quality of the camping in Camp 4, which is intensely crowded throughout the summer season. Camp 4 visitors must endure dense and low-quality campsites. Planners should recognize the historic importance of this campground. Our main hope is that Camp 4 can be expanded to approximately double its current size and that the bathrooms upgraded to service both the needs of the campers and the needs of the many visitors who frequent that area. Future Camping Locations 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 that were damaged in the 1997 flood. If the MRP limits the number of sites in the historical campgrounds in favor of riparian values, planners should seek to locate additional camping in sites now occupied by developed lodging rather than reducing the quantity and quality of camping opportunities. In addition to the Rivers Area and the Pine and Oak Area, other potential locations identified in the workbook for possible camping, and other areas where we and our partners at the Access Fund would support the creation of additional campsites, include: 7 The Backpackers Expansion area and the area immediately east of the Ahwahnee cabins 7 The old group sites east of Backpackers Campground 7 The Stables Area 7 The Upper Pines Loop Addition and Upper Pines Walk-In area 7 The West of Lodge area and East of Camp 4 areas, and 7 The Pine and Oak areas Length of Stay Climbers venture to Yosemite Valley to attempt some of the longest rock climbs in North America. The specifics of the rock type; intimidating nature of the climbing; and the unique, big-wall techniques necessary for such ascents generally require lengthy stays for climbers to make their ascents in reasonable safety. In addition to increased campsites throughout the Park, we suggest methods that will allow climbers to remain in the Park for longer periods of time. River Access West of Pohono Bridge: Issue 22 The Merced River Gorge segment west of Pohono Bridge has a number of popular climbing areas (Cookie Cliff, the Rostrum, Reed's Pinnacle, Elephant Rock, among others). Climber parking and approach access to these areas should be retained and improved to allow for safe access to these crags. CONCLUSION The AAC hopes these comments are helpful to the planning process. We want to be clear that our priorities are the increase in camping opportunities in general, specific improvements to Camp 4, adequate length of stay for climbers and safe parking near destination crags. We stand ready to help further interpret the history and modern methodology of climbing in Yosemite by working with the Park and other non-profits to create any exhibits the final Plan might call for. Yosemite may be the most iconic destination for climbers from the United States and around the world. Thank you for considering the concerns of climbers in this Plan. We care about the Park. We are part of its history and integral to the current culture of the Park. National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis summed this up nicely in his September letter to the editors of National Geographic magazine when he wrote: "Conservation and climbing have been inextricably connected since John Muir first ascended Cathedral Peak in Yosemite Valley in 1869. Your article [by Mark Jenkins] missed an opportunity to share the story of the cooperation between climbers and park managers to preserve Yosemite's vertical wilderness. Many climbers return to Yosemite yearly and have worked with the National Park Service to develop and improve low-impact climbing techniques to protect the park's iconic big walls. We look forward to continuing to play roles that support the Park and enhance volunteerism." We could not agree more. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or need clarification. You can reach me directly at 303-951-4561 or by e-mail at ppowers@americanalpineclub.org. I stand ready to help in any way. Sincerely, Phil Powers Executive Director Cc: Mike Gauthier, YNP Chief of Staff; Linda McMillan, AAC Yosemite Committee Chair; Brady Robinson, Access Fund Executive Director; Chris McNamara, Supertopo.

Correspondence ID: 238 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Recreational Groups
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: December 14, 2011

BY EMAIL:

Re: Comments on Merced River Plan/Transportation Improvement Strategies Report.

Dear Superintendent Neubacher and Members of the MRP Planning Team:

The following are ideas that came to me while reading the YNP Transportation Improvement Strategies Report (July 19, 2011). Since some of these may have some merit in the context of the Merced River Plan, I am submitting them as comments on that Plan. (My primary comments on the MRP proper are included in the comments of the Access Fund on the MRP.) I am submitting these comments as an individual, since they do not directly implicate climbing issues. These comments relate entirely to the peak visitation period in Yosemite Valley.

Close One Lane on Northside and Southside Drives, Use the Closed Lane for Parking, and Provide Shuttle Service to Parkers.

One striking feature of Yosemite Valley during the peak season is how fast traffic moves on the western stretches of Northside and Southside Drives. Sometimes it seems faster than is safe or necessary, since people are in one of the most beautiful places in the world. What's the rush? Closing one lane and using it for peak season parking would provide a place for overflow parking, slow traffic in the other lane, and allow people to become more familiar with the west end of the Valley. Of course, temporary shuttle service with temporary shuttle stops would need to be delineated, traffic control would have to be carefully managed so people exiting their cars were safe from moving traffic (but this would be no different than parking in an urban setting), and a roadside walkway of some sort would need to be delineated so people could walk along the road to the nearest shuttle stop. This sort of "emergency" parking use could have one beneficial and unintended consequence: it could cause visitors to realize that the last conceivable spaces for parking were indeed being put to use, and that barring a change in transportation behavior by a significant segment of the visitor population, direct limitations on visitation would be necessary.

Provide More Trailhead Information to Visitors.

One way to reduce demand for parking is to encourage visitors to spend less time driving from place to place for brief stops and more time in one or two places for longer periods. This reduces the inefficiency inherent in many auto movements in and out of parking spaces. The Valley has many places for visitors to stop briefly, get out of their car and snap a photo, and then drive on to the next spot. A visitor entering the Valley on Highway 120 can stop at Valley View, Cascade Falls, Pohono Spring, Bridal Veil Falls, El Cap Bridge, Swinging Bridge, Sentinel Meadow, Sentinel Bridge, Stoneman Meadow, Lower Yosemite Falls, and El Cap Meadow without having to know anything about the Valley or go any distance from their car.

For this same visitor to find a trail to hike is a very different matter. Most trails are invisible to the casual visitor in their car, with only diminutive signage, and that often invisible from the road. And aside from the perimeter trail, most trails head up the sides of the Valley and don't appear to stop for a long time! In short, there is very little incentive for casual visitors to get out of their car and explore these longer trails. Encouraging visitors to do so would benefit both visitors and the transportation system, by reducing auto movements.

One way to do so would be to redesign trails and re-sign trailheads so that visitors are informed of and provided with a defined, named, and tangible view location that is one-half to one hour from the trailhead (even though the trail would continue up to the rim of the Valley). Both the Yosemite Falls and Four-Mile trails already have such features, but there is presently little or no effort to make the casual visitor aware of them.

There may also be locations where new trails could be built, or old ones restored that would fit this description. (An example is the old CCC trail to the base of Snow Creek Falls that could be extended up through manzanita and low-angle slabs to provide a view of these falls and of Half Dome.) Climbers know the pleasure of the different views of the Valley from relatively low elevations on their climbs and approach trails, and this experience could be opened up to casual visitors as well. An example of a new trail possibility (which I hesitate to mention) is to replace the climbers' descent trail from Manure Pile Buttress with a visitors' trail to the top of this formation, which provides excellent views of the west-central part of the Valley.

Another way to disperse use and "fix" visitors at attractions for longer periods of time would be to make some of the Valley's attractions more accessible to visitors. One example would be to provide parking on the north side of Northside Drive at El Cap Meadows and install signage and a trail to encourage visitors to explore the base of the formation (with appropriate warnings about rockfall, etc.). Other possibilities would be to build trails to Ribbon Falls and the base of Upper Yosemite Falls (following the semi-technical approach that climbers use now, starting behind the NPS stables and workshop).

Sincerely yours

Correspondence ID: 239 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: NatureBridge Non-Governmental
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher and Merced River Plan team:

Thank you for this and other opportunities to provide input into the Merced River Plan's development. Numerous staff participated in the workbook review process and greatly appreciated the ability to attend public meetings in El Portal, Yosemite Valley, San Francisco, and online webinars. This workbook also proved to be an excellent teaching tool, as our field educators regularly used it to demonstrate to our students how their voice could play a role in protecting the park.

We look forward to working with you to see the successful completion of the Merced River Plan.

Attached, please find the NatureBridge comments. Feel free to contact me should you have difficulty accessing the file.

Sincerely, Kristina Rylands

Yosemite Institute Scoping Comments for the Merced River Plan

February 15, 2010

Prepared by Leigh Westerlund, Institute Director

The following is a list of key elements which are associated with the Merced River corridor and are necessary for the sustained operation of the Yosemite Institute program. We present them in an effort to provide the National Park Service with as much information as possible to ensure that Yosemite Institute is able to continue to inspire personal connections to the natural world and responsible actions to sustain it, now and in the future. The list is bulleted, brief, and direct to aid in the consumption of the information. We have separated each topic into two categories: elements we would like to maintain, and unmet needs of the program. If we should follow a different format, please let us know.

Trail use

Maintain: ? Trail capacity for an average of 268 participants (divided into smaller groups of 15 on the trail) in Yosemite Valley for day use Monday through Friday, second week in September through second week in June ("school year season") ? Maintain current self-regulated quotas on popular trails (Yosemite Falls (5 groups / day) and Vernal Falls (7 groups / day))

Unmet needs: ? Safe walking and biking trail access to the West end of the Valley from the accommodations in the East end of the Valley ? Boardwalks on Ahwahnee, Leidig, and El Capitan Meadows to ensure responsible meadow travel

Program

Maintain: ? Assistance to the NPS in resource monitoring and restoration projects ? Use of the Happy Isles Nature Center during the winter season (when closed to the general public). It is also important to note that groups visit Happy Isles Nature Center and it is a valuable teaching tool when open to the general public as well. ? Access to indoor spaces during inclement weather during the day. Areas currently being used (when available) include Garden Terrace and Cliff Room at the Lodge, the Historic Lounge and the Dining Pavilion in Curry Village, the Great Room at the Ahwahnee, the Auditorium, the Theater, the Indian Museum, the Visitor's Center, the yurt in Camp 6, and LeConte Memorial. Alternatives to these locations in similar areas would be fine, and any improvements to the current list would also be welcome ? Storage space for outdoor clothing and footwear where students are staying (currently WOB 9 in Curry Village) ? Outdoor amphitheater and indoor auditorium space for up to 200 participants Sunday through Thursday nights during the school year season, located within a 15-minute walk of student accommodations (Note that for participants housed in Curry Village, the 15-minute requirement precludes the use of spaces in Yosemite Village). Lower River amphitheater has been a perfect location for outdoor program space when weather permits.

Unmet needs: ? Indoor orientation and free time space adjacent to student accommodations Other ? Our participants currently use the ice rink in Curry Village during their free time. It is a new experience for many of our diverse participants, and many of our groups look forward to it. Because it is not a part of our program, we do not have a stance, one way or another, on whether or not it should continue to be an option.

Student transportation

Maintain: ? Free shuttle to as many east and west end points as is reasonable (Bridalveil parking lot would be a wonderful improvement) ? Ability for Yosemite Institute participants to arrive and depart from their Yosemite Valley destinations

(currently done by a combination of parent vehicles, charter busses, and Amtrak (VIA)). If the Park were to specify which types of transportation Yosemite Institute student participants should use to arrive and depart from Yosemite Valley it would not dramatically alter the program.

Unmet needs: ? Expanded access to trailheads in Yosemite National Park but outside of Yosemite Valley, using the free shuttle system. The list could include Inspiration Point, Tamarack Flat campground, Glacier Point, etc.

Student accommodations

Maintain: ? Accommodations for an average of 268 student participants in Yosemite Valley in a location which is 300 feet beyond the NPS designated rockfall zone ? Food service and dining facilities adjacent to the student accommodations Unmet needs: ? Facilities which model sustainable building, maintenance, and use practices

Administrative support

Maintain: ? Valley base of operations to support field staff for communication and emergencies with a minimum of 7 work stations and associated utility space (kitchenette, shower and bathroom, and open space for teaching supplies) with high speed internet access and insulation during the school year season ? the number of work stations and the additional utility space represent a slight increase over the current situation ? Work stations for 12 people in El Portal, with associated meeting and office machine support space ? Work station for 1 person adjacent to the student accommodations, to support an on-site staff member responsible for participant support and security during the school year season ? Food preparation and storage space for all Valley-based student lunches, located in the Valley or El Portal ? Facilities and maintenance support and storage space in El Portal ? Teaching supplies and equipment storage space for the entire Yosemite Institute program in the Valley or El Portal

Staff transportation

Maintain: ? Public transportation between El Portal and Yosemite Valley ? Primary commute times for staff are 7:00am ? 9:00am and 4:00pm ? 6:00pm with an additional run at 9:30pm. An average of 40 staff would be commuting to and from Yosemite Valley and either Crane Flat or Henness Ridge Monday through Friday during the school year season. Currently staff members use a combination of public transportation, bicycles, and carpools. ? During the summer season and on weekends, we anticipate 20 staff commuting during the above outlined times ? contingent on the completion of the new environmental education center

Unmet needs: ? Designated cycle lane between El Portal and Yosemite Valley

Staff accommodations

Maintain: ? 32 beds which can be grouped into multi-room housing units in El Portal ? Shared community space for social functions in El Portal (currently the Community Hall serves this role) ? Basic community services in El Portal ? grocery store, gas station, school, library, emergency medical care, exercise facilities, post office (it would be great to gain access to the NPS exercise facilities in El Portal for Yosemite Institute staff)

Unmet Needs: ? 8 additional beds in El Portal, which can be grouped with the current 32 beds in multi-room housing units) ? 8 family housing units for managerial support staff in El Portal

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Correspondence ID: 240 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: December 14, 2011

Planning Department Yosemite National Park Attn: Merced River Plan

Dear Park Planners,

The following are comments for your planning efforts as they relate to the Merced River Plan. As I do not have the time to fill out the workbook that you have so nicely created which I could download, I would like instead to submit comments that I hope are helpful. This being the deadline I wish to keep the comments brief but to the point.

Flood damaged campgrounds in Yosemite Valley: I am in favor of looking to the 1980 General Management Plan for guidance with regards to where to place and what to do with the currently flood damaged campgrounds, i.e. Lower and Upper River, the western portion of Lower Pines and the former group campground. I believe that these areas are better suited for camping than are areas outside of Yosemite Valley, because most people come to Yosemite Valley, hoping for a Yosemite Valley experience, not a random forest camping experience. Any related human impacts on the Merced River can be mitigated to an acceptable level if you simply space the campsites out as was the part of the original plan in 1980 which I participated in by sending in

comments back in the mid to late 1970s. The Park should pull back any sites that are too close to the river. These campgrounds are not in the rock fall zone, and only on rare occasion are they in a flood zone; which generally only occurs during times of the year that camping could be managed according to weather dictates. Any floods that occur, as is the case in other parks where campgrounds are in seasonal flood zones, should simply be managed so as to evacuate people and property as needed in anticipation of such an event.

The other existing campgrounds in Yosemite Valley: I believe that the existing campgrounds that were not damaged from flooding are too congested and should be separated like mentioned above, and that the total number of campgrounds should be close to 600 sites, down from the original 800 and up from the current number of about half that amount. It is my feeling that these campgrounds should be addressed with the same design that was part of the 1980 General Management Plan, which was drafted so as to create a more natural camping experience to campers who come to Yosemite to have a unique camping experience in this special place. Now by comparison, campsites are so close that it is difficult to have a positive camping experience.

Any future plan for campgrounds in Yosemite Valley should include showers that are available at convenient locations within the campgrounds, as well as Ice Machines located at the entrance of each campground. In addition, you could also consider a Laundromat for campers wishing to wash their clothes. The justification for such amenities is so that campers won't have to travel much.

Carrying Capacity: It is my strong belief that a specific number should be given to limit the number of people inside the Park at any one time. I feel that the experience that people have while in Yosemite should not be negative due to crowding, which is the case right now from June through August. Currently, with close to four million visitors a year it is common to hear people complain about how they either had a negative experience because of crowding, or would never go back due to crowding in summer months. Crowding is a real problem that the Park has talked about since the 1960s but has done absolutely nothing about. Building infrastructures like shuttles or parking lots to accommodate more day trippers is not the answer. It's time to shut the gates when a predetermined limit of people is reached. People can get used to placing a reservation if they want to go to the Park during those months of summer when it's too crowded.

I don't think that it's fair that the Park restricts people who come to camp by limiting the number of campsites available these days to a low number of only about 400, while there are absolutely no limits to anyone arriving through the gate, contributing to frequent gridlocks. In the future, as populations increase, and the desire to experience nature in any preserved form, will be rare. Outside of National Parks nature is becoming rare. There will come a time when nature will be even more unique and hard to find than it is now, and Yosemite will be sought out for its uniqueness. You cannot continue to simply let people drive into the Park without a reservation. The demand has reached the tipping point. It's time to shut the gate when it's too busy, to help create a new Yosemite experience, one that does not come with an asterisk which references the ever increasing crowds. No longer should you attempt to accommodate all who want to come. You need to implement a plan to do this very soon. You've been dragging your feet on this subject far too long. Accommodating the masses is not the purpose of the National Park Service. To capture every possible tourist dollar is not the purpose of the National Park Service. To advertise and market all of the National Parks all over the world to prospective travelers should not be the purpose of the National Park Service. The purpose of the National Park Service should be to preserve these places of wildness and refuge in a balanced way, so that they can also provide people with recreation. But, you need to do it at a mitigated level that does not negatively impact the Parks so that future generations can also experience a nature.

This Park should be put back into some semblance of the pristine condition that it was in when the National Park Service took on the responsibility to maintain it. In those days, in the early 20th century, far fewer people visited the Park per year. Because of that, the experience was considerably more natural, with some exceptions where the National Park Service allowed visitors to encroach into areas such as the meadows to camp, etc. With hindsight it shouldn't be hard to see that mistakes from the past should not reoccur. Camping was not designed properly from the beginning, but we have an opportunity to change all of that now. Camping in Yosemite could and should epitomize what a special place Yosemite is, which it is not currently for campers. If there is any possibility to re-create the camping experience in Yosemite into something better than it has been in the past, I suggest that you utilizing the old, now damaged and closed campgrounds. I believe you have the potential to create something that could be the most desirable Park camping experience in the entire National Park System of camping options, if not the world. It can happen if you make use of the currently damaged campgrounds. I believe that these old campgrounds are needed so as to spread the total inventory of campsites that you will create over a larger area.

Campgrounds in the past were designed so as to accommodate too many people per acre. Because it's so difficult to get a campsite reservation it's easy to see that far more people want to come to Yosemite to camp than you can possibly accommodated. This problem will get worse as time goes on. The same is the case at the gates with day-trippers of all kinds wanting unrestricted access to visit the Park for the day. It's not possible, or realistic, to accommodate everyone anymore. To try to do so, is poor management.

It's time to rethink the Yosemite experience not just for campers, but also for all kinds of use that would include day-use as well as other forms of overnight accommodations, so as to obtain the best possible experience that Yosemite could potentially offer. To do that you must pick a limit to daily visitation; a hard number that will not change, which will be the threshold of visitors allowed into the Park during any given day. To simply talk about various management solutions to mitigate the experience of crowding is no answer to the problem. The future Yosemite experience should be better than that. Follow the court's mandate, and pick a number.

To do that, you should begin planning to receive input from the public as to how to manage such a system. You should have more planning meetings to determine the best way to manage a reservation system. The Symposium you held in the park a few

years back was a good start, but everyone was afraid to bring up the topic of actual visitation limits. So far I feel that the Park Planners have not addressed the topic enough, and that if you were serious about planning for Yosemite's future you would not be asking us to comment on so many various projects without first establishing that limit. That limit is supposed to be what determines what could be built in the future. Instead, you're asking us to decide on what we'd like to see in Yosemite before you address the most important question of all, which is how many people should be in the Park at any one time. That's where you went wrong the last time, and here we are again, having the same discussion.

You need to hold many more public meetings to discuss not just the idea of how to manage crowding in the Park, but instead you would address how to manage the Park by actually limiting all Park visitation to lower levels, perhaps even pre 1970 levels. You need to start talking about how you intend to manage the gates and how to implement at least a partial reservation system, so that people can plan their trips to Yosemite National Park during busy times of the year and work around the problem of user/carrying capacity limitations. It is my belief that people will eventually get their minds around limited visitation with somewhat restrictive conditions you come up with, because it's the right thing to do. The court has told you to find a solution, and I believe the obvious solution is to pick a number of visitors that is the number that will enable you to keep the experience of those visiting the Park from being one that elicits the sensation of a crowded place.

If you're looking for a number, I will suggest that you find a way so as to not allow more than 3,000,000 visitors a year into Yosemite. I'd like to say half that, but don't think that you'd do it. I believe that there should be a balance between commercial activities and non-commercial, as well as day use and overnight use which doesn't place the solutions for Yosemite's crowding solely on the backs of Yosemite's campers, as was the case with the last planning effort.

Please continue to allow cars in the park, and re-open the roadside soft shoulders and pullouts that used to be accessible to cars for the purpose of parking. If you limit daily visitation to a manageable level, there shouldn't be such difficulty finding places to park and walk around. Gridlock will no longer be a problem in the Park. Tuolumne won't be simply a place to push people when the Park gets crowded. Tuolumne should not be for Yosemite Valley overflow, but instead a special High Sierra location for those who actually chose it as their primary destination.

Roads: I suggest that you eliminate the one-way roads in the Valley, which encourage a faster than safe average speed. One-way roads make it difficult to avoid driving very long loops around the Valley to get where you want to go. I've been around long enough to remember what it was like with two-way traffic in the Valley, and think it was a much better method of getting around back then than is the case now. If you limit the volume of cars and buses at the gate, so that traffic is not gridlocked, you should find that two-lane traffic is a better solution. To enforce a slower speed you could easily enforce the speed with a system of cameras to give tickets to speeding vehicles, in addition to other means. Merced River: I am in favor of leaving dead branches and trees in the Merced River to restore a natural river. I think that adult visitors should be allowed to raft anywhere they want, regardless if it is safe or not, taking safety into their own hands, just as you allow rock climbers to take their own risks. I feel that children should be under the supervision of their parents, and that it should not be the Park's position to dictate if they should raft or not to raft. But, the Park should post signage with relatively strong warnings associated with the known risks.

I feel that campers have been given a bad reputation in the past for impacting the riverbanks, and that in fact, the reputation they have received is misdirected. The fact is that the Yosemite National Park Service has been responsible for the problem based on decisions they have made to remove natural debris from the river. In an effort to accommodate people, the Park has tried to keep it safe for swimmers and rafting children, and in doing so, they took it upon themselves to denude a natural river landscape. The items taken out of the river were actually needed in the river and along the riverbanks in order to keep the river wild. By removing dead trees and branches the river was allowed to flow too fast, stripping the riverbanks of soil. Over time, this method of management caused the river to flow too straight and too fast, and over time, because of the lack of natural debris the river widened to its current width. Because of that the river cannot sustain aquatic life in a natural way. This unnatural river which you created, and are now hoping to re-wild cannot repair itself without being allowed to do what rivers do naturally, which is to get clogged up with tree trunks and branches, and allowed to meander through the Valley as wild rivers generally do. I see that you are now doing something about the problem, but you should not prevent people from swimming and rafting in it while it is returning to a wild river. Bridges: I feel that a little human management of the river, so as to avoid a total re-landscaping of Yosemite Valley by a wild and natural river can be possible, and is needed. You simply need to occasionally select and remove some dead trees where they might otherwise have a negative effect on roads, bridges or human life, if in fact an obviously dangerous situation can be mitigated by doing so.

Tenaya Lake: I would like to see a very small auto friendly campground up there somewhere, as I've stated in the past.

There is a lot more that could be said in many areas, but I would like to leave it for a later time.

Thank you

Correspondence ID: 241 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent;

Thank you for including me in the Merced River planning process. As a local resident, Yosemite is near and dear to my heart, having spent much of my childhood enjoying its splendor. Much of my experience in Yosemite and the surrounding Sierras has

been in the form of primitive camping and backpacking and my comments will reflect this. I will attempt to follow the planning workbook and provide comments per the limited potential management options provided.

SEGMENT 1 VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM 1. Segment 1 Wilderness Trails: High Encounter Rates

Management Option 1C: Eliminate High Sierra Camp.

In my opinion the High Sierra Camps represent an environmental justice issue. Their use is limited to a very expensive lottery system which is unfair to those who cannot afford the fee or do not have the luck of the draw.

2. Recreational User Conflicts

Management Option 2C: Close or reduce Merced Lake High Sierra Camp capacity (to 42 beds or less) to limit concessioner stock use.

Management Option 2D: Close Merced Lake High Sierra Camp Convert to backpacker campground and eliminate concessioner stock use. Concessioner's should not be allowed to profit from something that belongs to all Americans.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS 3. Merced Lake Backpackers' Campground Use Levels

Management Option 3C: Retain Backpackers' Campground so that visitor use is concentrated.

4. Merced Lake High Sierra Camp: Wilderness and ORV Impacts

Management Option 4F: Close Merced Lake High Sierra Camp and restore to natural conditions. Management Option 4G: See comment 2D, convert Merced Lake High Sierra Camp to primitive campground to ease high level of Backpackers' Campground use.

5. Little Yosemite Valley Backpackers' Campground: Crowding

Management Option 5B: Retain Backpackers' Campground so that visitor use is concentrated.

Management Option 5D: Add additional composting toilets to address human waste concerns or provide personal waste packets to backpackers as is done on Mt. Whitney.

SEGMENT 2.1 ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES 6. Clarks Bridge to El Cap Bridge: Large Woody Debris Management

Management Option 6B: Discontinue removal of large woody debris. Allow boating seasonally. Educate visitors about risk of river use and allow seasonal closures to protect visitor safety.

7. Riparian Zone: Campsites

Management Option 7B: Manage visitor use at existing campsites by delineating parking and tent pads and locating this infrastructure as far away from the river as possible to prevent vegetation trampling and erosion. Design river access points in resilient locations and restore riparian areas to natural conditions.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIRECT CONNECTION TO RIVER VALUES 8. Cultural ORV: Visitor Use and Infrastructure

Management Option 8C: Conduct on-going consultation and data collection to ensure the protection of ethnographic resources. Partner with traditional practitioners to conduct regular condition assessment monitoring.

Management Option 8D: Bring ethnographic resources to the attention of visitors. Educate them about the cultural significance.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM 9. Valley: Camping Demand

Management Option 9B: In addition to Option 1 (9A), identify new campground locations or expand existing campgrounds outside of the valley.

Management Option 9D: Convert concessionaire stables to campgrounds. See comment Option 2D regarding concessionaires.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS 10. Sugar Pine Bridge/Awahnee Bridge/Road Berm: Free-Flowing Condition

Management Option 10D: Due to the historical significance of the bridge, efforts should be made to avoid its removal. Remove the elevated road berm which connects the two bridges so high water will be able to go around the bridge and back into the main channel.

SEGMENT 2.2 ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES 11. Housekeeping Camp: Riparian and Flood Plain Impacts

Management Option 11D: Remove all lodging units, infrastructure and riprap and restore the floodplain and riparian ecosystem to natural conditions.

Management Option 11E: Replace lodging units with campsites in the more resilient locations and delineate river access to resilient locations.

12. Upper and Lower Rivers Campground Areas: 1997 Flood Impacts

Management Option 12B: Restore visitor use opportunities (such as camping, parking and picnic areas) throughout the entire area of the former Upper and Lower Rivers Campgrounds. Ensure protection of river values by locating infrastructure above the high water mark and outside of the riparian area. Restore eroded riverbanks and impacted riparian vegetation.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIRECT CONNECTION TO RIVER VALUES 13. Cultural ORV: Visitor Use Impacts

Management Option 13A: Relocate visitor use areas where practicable to avoid ongoing threats and disturbances. Conduct regular condition assessment monitoring.

Management 13D: Educate visitors of the historical significance of these sites. Eliminate pack stock use, reroute hiking trails where practicable and conduct regular condition assessment monitoring.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM 14. Valley: Camping Demand

Management Option 14B: In addition to Option 14A, identify new campground locations or expand existing campgrounds inside the park but outside of Yosemite Valley.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS 15. Camp 6 Intersection: Congestion

Management Option 15C: Relocate pedestrian crossing to northwest corner of parking area to avoid intersection issues. Relocate information kiosk within the lot so that it is easier to find.

Management Option 15B: Redesign parking area to protect riparian zone and improve operational efficiency.

Management Option 15F: There should be no pedestrian over/under crossings. Congestion problems should not be solved by adding new structures.

SEGMENT 2.3 ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES 16. Leidig Meadow: Informal Trail Impacts

Management Option 16B: Remove social trials and restore meadow. Install fending and place signs to educate visitors about human impacts to meadows.

Management Option 16C: Boardwalks detract from the natural ORVs of the meadows. Use temporary fencing to direct use away from impacted areas. Visitors need to be educated as to the fragile nature of this ecosystem.

17. Swinging Bridge: Riparian Impacts

Management Option 17A: Redesign picnic area in its current location to better manage visitor use. Identify additional parking on the south side of South Side Drive. Designate the area as a formal river access point, fence off sensitive areas, redirect use to more resilient areas and reestablish riparian vegetation. Remove riprap and replace with brush layering (bioengineering) to

promote the establishment of riparian vegetation.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM 18. Yosemite Valley: Paddling and Floating

Management Option 18B: Same as Option 18A, but allow paddling and floating on a longer stretch of river to El Cap Crossover. Allow private floating only by permit. Open a longer stretch of the river for this use (from Clark's Bridge to Pohono Bridge.) Allow use throughout the year as long as water conditions are suitable. Prohibit commercial floating. To limit resource impacts, designate vessel put-in and take-out locations.

Management Option 18E: I cannot stress enough my distaste for commercial concessionaires operating for profit in Yosemite National Park. This park belongs to all of us and no single individual, company or corporation should be allowed to profit from its use.

19. Valley: Camping Demand

Management Option 19B: In addition to Option 18A, identify new campground locations or expand existing campgrounds inside the park but outside of Yosemite Valley.

Management Option 19D: As was indicated under Merced River Management Challenges, Land Uses and Associated Developments, 62% of overnight use is accommodated by lodging. I consider this an environmental justice issue. It is unfair to turn those away who wish to experience the Valley by camping out under the stars in favor of those who have the wealth to stay in the lodge. I suggest eliminating or relocating Yosemite Lodge out of the Valley and perhaps out of the Park. Shuttles can be provided to transport Lodge visitors into the Park. If not for the historical significance of the Awanhee, I would recommend its removal as well. Additional campsites could be provided as well as temporary tent camps in the vacated lodge area. Removal of the lodge would eliminate parking and congestion problems as well.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS 20. Yosemite Lodge: Intersection Congestion

Management Option 20B: Implement an electronically controlled intersection for both vehicles and pedestrians.

Management Option 20D: As I stated under Management Option 19D, above, removal of Yosemite Lodge would eliminate parking and congestion problems associated with the lodge. No additional structures should be constructed to address congestion problems.

SEGMENT 2.4 ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES 21. El Cap Meadow: Informal social Trails

Management Option 21C: Selectively remove vegetation that is blocking roadside views of El Capitan.

Management Option 21B: Use restoration fencing to limit foot traffic into the meadow and designate appropriate meadow access points in more resilient locations.

Management Option 21E: Installing boardwalks and viewing platforms will intrude on the scenic ORVs of the area. Use temporary rail fencing to direct use away from impacted areas. Selectively remove conifers on the north side of the road to improve viewing.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM 22. West Pohono Bridge: River Access

Management Option 22C: Designate river access and use boulders to limit parking in unpaved parking areas.

Management Option 22D: No paving, no curbing. If paving is necessary use non-petroleum based materials.

23. Valley: Camping Demand

Management Option 23B: In addition to option 1, identify new campground locations or expand existing campgrounds inside the park but outside of Yosemite Valley.

Management Option 23D: Please see my ideas under Management Option 19D.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS 24. Cathedral Beach Picnic Area: High Visitor Use

Management Option 24A: Redesign picnic area to better manage the level of visitor use and designate the area as a formal river

assess point, fence off sensitive areas, redirect use to more resilient areas, and reestablish riparian vegetation.

Management Option 24C: Provide a delineated loop road for unloading, with parking farther away from the picnic area.

25. Sentinel Beach Picnic Area: Visitor Experience

Management Option 25A: Redesign picnic area in its current location to accommodate picnicking and rafting; formalize vehicle access and parking; designate river access.

Management Option 25E: Provide a delineated loop road.

SEGMENT 4 ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES 26. Greenmeyer Sandpit: Flood and Riparian Plant Impacts from Fill Material

Management Option 26B: Cultivate fill material to allow flooding cycles and other natural processes to flush the site gradually and reclaim the flood plain.

27. Infrastructure: Valley Oaks Impacts

Management Option 27A: Remove all facilities and restore the understory.

Management Option 27D: If it is necessary to remove restrooms, replace with portable restrooms or relocate to an area that does not impact seedling recruitment.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS 28. Maintenance Administrative Complex: Roadside Parking

Management Option 28B: Relocate parking from the river's edge. Build new parking east of Foresta Road at the Administrative Facility (west of office/warehouse building or in front of waste water treatment plant). Restore sites between Foresta Road and the river.

Management Option 28C: Build new parking in front of waste water treatment plant using non-petroleum based materials.

SEGMENT 5,6,7 AND 8 ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES 29. Wawona Campground: Campground Activity Near River

Management Option 29B: Designate access points to the river to reduce resource impacts.

Management Option 29C: Relocate camp sites that are too close to the river, designate access points and educate visitors of the fragile nature of the riparian habitat.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS 30. Camp A.E. Wood

Management Option 30A: Stabilize archeological remains of Camp and preserve in situ by minimizing ongoing visitor use impacts. Provide interpretive display highlighting the importance of Camp A.E. Wood as an example of African-American soldiers in park history as well as archeological stewardship.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM 31. South Fork: Paddling and Floating

Management Option 31B: Continue to allow paddling and floating in this segment with designated put-in and take-out for boating in the section through Wawona proper and limits on the number of boats per year. No limits on recreational floating and related water play.

Management Option 31C: Do not allow for commercial boating, only private paddling and floating with limits if necessary.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS 32. Picnic Area Near Wawona Store Management Option 32A: Redesign picnic area in its current location, designate river access.

33. Impoundement: Effects on Free-Flowing Condition

Management Option 33A: Investigate reasonable options, such as water system development from Biledo Spring or Big Creek.

Retain the impoundment remains until other options are developed.

Management Option 33B: Eliminate or relocate unnecessary development that requires surface water withdrawals.

RIVER MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES: YOUR IDEAS

ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE VALUES How can we protect and restore free-flowing and hydrologic function? -I won't pretend to be a hydrologist but I believe that you cannot control the river. It will flow where it wants. The best thing we can do is to understand this and not put obstacles in its way. Bridges should be temporary and movable. Structures should be temporary and movable. This is why I advocate for campgrounds in lieu of lodging facilities.

How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -Educate, educate, educate! Visitors need to understand how fragile this ecosystem is. If we must, construct temporary barriers such as rail fences. Boardwalks only serve to detract from the scenic ORVs and should not be considered.

Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration? -In my opinion, the entire Park is a high priority for restoration and protection but primarily the meadows and riparian habitat.

How can we conserve our limited water supply? -By eliminating all unnecessary development in the Valley. There should be no residential lodging in the Valley, especially lodging provided for concessionaire employees. They should reside outside of the Park and be shuttled in.

What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality: -Remove all asphalt (petroleum based) surfaces for starters by replacing all parking lots and trails with soil stabilization products such as NaturalPave XL Resin Pavement and EMC Squared. These products have been successfully used at Lake Merritt in Oakland, California; Ft. Vancouver, Washington; Evergreen Community College; and Springs Preserve, Las Vegas, Nevada to name a few.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIRECT CONNECTION TO RIVER VALUES What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources: -Highlight their importance to visitors. Provide protection by fencing with temporary rail fencing. Add informational kiosks to educate visitors.

How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? -Eliminate all commercial use of the river which currently severely impacts it. Allow only private paddling and floating and limit excessive use via permit process.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at what locations would be appropriate? -By eliminating development of all kinds more parking could be provided for visitors by converting spaces presently used for other purposes. Add small dispersed parking lots in areas with minimal visual impacts. There should be no large parking lots in the west Valley.

Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -I do support bus services and utilize the YARTS system from Merced. At a cost of $20.00 round trip and no park entry fee it's a great deal. My friends in Fresno are envious.

Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -I would support remote parking and shuttle services. I would like to see vehicles eliminated from the Valley with everyone shuttled in. If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -I do not think a day use reservation system is appropriate.

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? 1) I may use a day use parking/vehicle permit, however, I would prefer remote parking and shuttle system. 2) I would support a day use parking/vehicle permit system provided a reservation system is not required.

What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? What is needed to support these recreation opportunities? -Camping, backpacking, hiking, biking, paddling, floating, fishing, and low impact activities. Off road vehicles are not appropriate. Mules and horses are appropriate in a limited capacity.

Additional camping sites only in areas presently occupied with development, such as the DNC stables area but not in the west Valley.

Increased bicycle opportunities throughout the Valley, including west Valley to Pohono Bridge. Asphalt trails are not necessary.

LAND USES AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? -By eliminating all commercial development and residential support. All retail and food services

should be maintained outside of the park thus allowing for more visitor use. -How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -By eliminating all lodging facilities and providing only temporary housekeeping tent camping and primitive campsites.

What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River Corridor? -Interpretive ranger programs to educate visitors about the fragile habitat and archeological sites, backpacking support (ie; permits, bear canisters, miscellaneous backpacking supplies), camping support (small market, no souvenirs), more toilets (composting preferred) throughout Yosemite Valley to address the problem of human waste found behind trees and under rocks.

How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley? -Good question!

How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met? -We need to experience Yosemite the way John Muir did. We don't need restaurants, gift shops, horseback rides, rafting adventures, full service hotels. We need to be able to enjoy the sounds of nature, breath in the fresh air, look upon the vistas with awe, and dip our toes in the cold, clear water of the Merced River. The priority is the wilderness experience, period!

MY CLOSING COMMENT Yosemite Valley is a special place. It is ever changing. The river flows, the rocks fall. There is no place in Yosemite Valley that is safe from rock falls or flood waters. Therefore, all structures in the Valley should be temporary. The only residents in the Valley should be essential personnel necessary for the protection of the visitors and the environment. All who enter the Valley should be aware that they enter at their own risk and that risk could be great. For me the reward is worth the risk.

Correspondence ID: 242 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: ? How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function? -The restoration projects done in the Valley over the last 20 years have been impressive. I can't add to the Park Service's professionals' technical expertise.

? How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -Continue development patterns that stay out of the river's way in flood; continue educating users re: meadow trampling & other negative impacts.

? Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration? -Sections most critical to river function, and areas (including meadows) most critical to wildlife movement and other life requirements should get highest priority for restoration,

? What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources? -If possible, there should be more public education/interpretive info at more cultural resource sites. People care about what they know about.

? How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? -Boardwalks & other landscape architectural elements should mitigate human impacts while also allowing people to access different riverside qualities, e.g., raft access, wildlife watching points.

? If the National Park Service were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -Re-use earlier developed sites en route to Valley: at Chinquapin Flat, Wawona, Crane Flat, maybe Foresta as a main multi-modal transit hub?

? Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? Why or why not? -Only if buses are electric! Fleet of 20 years ago stunk up Hwy 41 for everybody! Longterm dayuser & employee solution is train to YV edge, bus in YV.

? Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? Why or why not? -Yes, especially if day users could park near entrance to valley & ride shuttles into valley.

? If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -Oh, man! Another reservation-for-profit racket?! Please, no.

? How can the National Park Service support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? -Why is "current mix" the aim? Looking at the MRP Draft Base Line Report, getting day-users in & out of Valley in mass transit would take pressure off river & other resources!

? How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that river values are protected? -Could a few upland sites at western end of Valley be made into small, low-impact campgrounds?

6B, 7B, 8A & 8B, 9A & 9B, 10C, 11A, 12A, 13A, 15A &15C. 16C: Remove social trails, restore meadows, apply rest/access rotation management to portions of some meadows, so public can experience natural meadows with less impacts. People protect what they care about, & care about what they know about. During resting (no public access) periods a meadow would provide prey & foraging habitat for owls, coyotes, & other predator species of wildlife. 19A, 20A, 21C & 21E: El Cap Meadow's overuse is related to watchers of El Capitan climbers, no? This meadow requires a site-specific management strategy to better accommodate the rockclimbers' spectators, including development of landscape architectural elements (boardwalks & platforms above floodstage of river, in sightlines of climbing routes?). 22B & 22D: Emphasize wildlife habitats in natural river-crossing & river-access wildlife corridors. Have planners already developed a wildlife habitat & travel corridor overlay for planning purposes? Recommend at least alternating human/wildlife access to river at west end of Yosemite Valley as well as in River Segment 4, El Portal, to maintain landscape-scale wildlife habitat & population connections. 23A

I've been above Nevada Fall only once. I'd love to visit this segment before I die, and I hope it will be an unpolluted, natural, relatively unpopulated wilderness if/when I get there. But I don't know enough to have specific management recommendations.

I'd like to advocate for managing for habitat elements for the wildlife: great gray owls need the riparian meadows to produce voles & other prey, fishers need the woody structures and the prey in oak ecosystems. We also need landscape architecture in spots that will let humans see these & other creatures without harming them.

Though not wholly within the W&SR boundary lines at Wawona, the golf course there is an anachronism taking up great grey owl meadows.

I think more transportation infrastructure could & should be removed from the river zone.

I think the best long-term solution for Yosemite Valley and the Merced River is a state-of-the-art train system situated well upland of the river, from Merced to Foresta or thereabouts... and perhaps looping around to Fish Camp and Wawona. Such a system could supplant day users' cars, tour buses, overnight guests and employee commuters travelling the 140 & 41 corridors into Yosemite Valley.

Correspondence ID: 243 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: National Trust for Historic Preservation Conservation/Preservation
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: RE: Comments on Merced River Plan Planning Workbook

Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation welcomes the opportunity to comment on the development of alternatives for the Comprehensive Management Plan for the Merced Wild and Scenic River (MRP) as required by the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act See 16 U.S.C. 1271(d)(1). In addition to the written comments on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook offered here, the National Trust participated in the Merced River Plan Fall Alternatives Development Workshop held in San Francisco on November 9, 2011. *

*Please note that at present we are limiting our comments to the Yosemite Valley river segments, and are focusing our attention on Merced River Plan goals and identification of Outstandingly Remarkable Values. In addition, these comments focus on historic resources from the park era, as Native American and pre-park era resources are addressed in the "cultrual values" ORV discussion. We will address other river segments, cultural values, and resource management and treatment options as appropriate as the planning process proceeds.

We are deeply concerned that the National Park Service has failed to include Historic Vlaues among those Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) being considered in the planning process. The omission is not only inconsistent with the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, but we fear it unreasonably lays the groundowrk for the destruction of Nationally-significant historic resources, including several historic bridges listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

We are furthermore concerned that the stated goals of the Merced RIver Plan Goals fail to include protection of historical and cultural resources (this despite the fact that Cultural Values - including tangible resources such as archeology - are identified as an ORV).

We urge the National Park Service to add Historical Values to the Outstandingly Remarkable Values and explicitly include protection of historic resources among the Merced River Plan Goals.

National Trust Interest and Past Involvement in Yosemite Planning Efforts: The National Trust is a private, non-profit corporation that helps people protect, enhance, and enjoy the places that matter to them. Chartered by Congress in 1949, the National Trust protects and defends America's historic resources, furthers the historic preservation policy of the United States, and facilitates public participation in the preservation of our nation's diverse heritage.

The National Trust has a keen interest in the future of Yosemite National Park and the protection of its rich cultural heritage. We

are a concurring party to the 1999 Programmatic Agreement Regarding Planning, Design, Construction, Operations, and Maintenance, Yosemite National Park, California, and have been actively engaged for many years in park planning efforts, including the Yosemite Valley Implrementation Plan, the Yosemite Valley Plan, and previous efforts to develop a Wild and Scenic River Management Plan for the Merced River.

Throughout the years of our involvement at Yosemite, the National Trust has repeatedly expressed concern that cultural and historical resources were being undervalued and underprotected through NPS planning efforts. That is not to say that progress hasn't been made. We are especially gratified by the 2006 listing of the Yosemite Valley Historic District, encompassing the whole valley floor, with many contributing features that had been previously been excluded from historic resource inventories.

For example, "Fort Yosemite", a structure that the National Trust long asserted to be historically significant, but that had been targeted for removal under previuos plans, has been listed as a contributing building in the Yosemite Valley Historic District, whose nomination calls it a "relatively innovative concrete building."

The recognition fo Fort Yosemite's significance is real progress. Indeed, a Yosemite Valley Maintenance Area Concept Map posted to the YOSE website on November 28, 2011 contemplates the reuse of the structure to house functions such as law enforecement, valley utilities & road operations and light maintenance for NPS and the Concessioner. That is precisely the kind of creative planning the National Park Service can do so well.

Current Merced River Plan Process is Flawed: Unfortunately, these advances only highlight the shortcomings of the current Merced River Plan process. In our March 12, 2000 comment letter on the Draft Merced River Plan then under review, the National Trust commended the NPS for the eloquent description of the cultural and historic significance of Yosemite Valley contained in the plan. We quoted:

"The surpassing historical significance of the Yosemite Valley landscape derives from the fact that countless generations of local tribal groups, and later untold millions of park visitors, have infused the Valley's natural features with great cultural significance. The cultural processes of defining sacred space, of turning land into landscape, and of making a wild place into a public park, have made Yosemite Valley into one of the most culturally sginificant natural places in AMerica (III-147)."

That language reappears nearly verbatim in the 2006 Yosemite Valley Historic District National Register nomination. While the Planning Workbook is by its nature a brief document, it is nonetheless extremely disappointing that its articulation in the Planning Workbook of the Merced River's Cultural Values for Yosemite Valley (Segment 2) is limited to just two elements: the Yosemite Valley Native American ethnographic resources, and the Yosemite Valley Archeological District.

While the Planning WOrkbook appropriately recognizes the Native American significance of Yosemite Valley, it entirely omits previous recognition that Yosemite is also culturally significant as a public park for millions of visitors, and that this significance is manifested in the physical development of the valley.

NPS Has Used Inappropriate Standard to Idenitify ORVs: The NPS's identification of the Merced RIver ORVs is naturally informed by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which declared to be the policy of the United States:

"...that certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geological, fish and wildlife, HISTORICAL, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations." 16 U.S.C. 1271 (emphasis added).

While the Act does not futher define Outstandingly Remarkable Values, federal agency resource professionals have developed interpretive criteria for evaluating river values based on professional judgement on a regional, physiographic, or geographic comparative basis.

The December 1999 Wild & Scenic River Study Process Technical Report of the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (also referenced in the Planning Workbook) states that "in order to be assessed as outstandingly remarkable, a river-related value must be a unique, rare or exemplary feature that is significant at a comparative regional or national scale." However, the NPS goes a step further in the Merced River Planning Workbook, inexplicably stating that ORVs are "TRULY exceptional qualities" (emphasis added).

The Planning Workbook continues to reference the December 1999 Technical Report, quoting: "such a value would be one that is a conspicuous example from among a number of similar values that are themselves uncommon or extraordinary."

The original context of that quote in the Technical Report conveys a less absolutist, more measured approach:

"Dictionary definitions of the words "unique" and "rare" indicate that such a value would be one that is a conspicuous example from among a number of similar values that are themselves uncommon or extraordinary. One possible procedure would be to list all of the river's special values and then assess whether they are unique, rare or exemplary within the state, physiographic

province, ecoregion, or the other are of comparison. Only one such value is needed for eligibility.

The area, region or scale of comparison is not fixed, and should be defined as that which serves as a basis for meaningful comparative analysis; it may vary depending on the value being considered. Typically, a "region" is defined on the scale of an administrative unit, a portion of a state, or an appropriately scaled physiographic or hydrologic unit" (12).

The Technical Report continues with more detailed eligibility criteria for each of the ORVs mentioned in the Act "to foster greater consistency within the federal river-administering agencies." For the History ORV, the criteria are stated as follows:

"The river or area within the river corridor contains a site(s) or features(s) associated with a significant event, and important person, or a cultural activity of the past that was rare or one-of-a-kind in the region. Many such sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A historic site(s) and/or features(s) is 50 years old or older in most cases" (15).

In addition to the Council's guidance in the Technical Report, the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act itself makes overtly clear that the protection of historic values should be paramount in the administration of the designated river system. The legislation states that "primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its esthetic, scenic, historic, archeologic, and scientific features." 16 U.S.C 1281 (a) (See also Friends of Yosemite Valley v. Norton, 348 F.3d 789)

The Technical Report does not suggest that historical resources must be National Historic Landmarks (of which there are three in Yosemite Valley) nor even that resources must be nationally significant (which the Yosemite Valley Historic District has been demonstrated to be.)

Yosemite Valley Historic Values are Nationally Significant: In fact, the Yosemite Valley Historic District National Register nomination provides the best possible guidance with which to assess Yosemite Valley's historical value as a potential ORV. The Yosemite Valley Historic District has been determined to be nationally significant under criteria A and C of the National Register, with significance in the areas of landscape architecture, architecture, politics/government, community planning and development, transportation, entertainment/recreation, and conservation.

The National Register nomination underscores the national significance and high histroical integrity of Yosemite Valley in numerous passages. These passages make clear that while Yosemite's national significance begins with Native American occupation of the valley and management of the landscape, that significance continues at least until 1942:

"The Yosemite Valley landscape is the result of a long and complex history of interactions between natural systems and human influences. For thousands of years, American Indians managed the landscape through burning and other practices. In the 1860s, Euro-Americans took over management of the valley floor landscape for the purpose of preserving it as a public park. This has resulted in a 150-year history of agricultural use, clearing, burning, and facility development. Yosemite Valley today is the landscape record of one of the most ambitious and historically significant experiments in the preservation of natural scenery ever attempted."

As noted above, the Planning Workbook inappropriately demands that ORV's be "truly exceptional qualities", but certainly a landscape that is an "archetype" for park planning would meet that standard. In the words of the National Register nomination:

"The valley floor landscapes as a whole is nationally significant in the themes of outdoor recreation, tourism, and conservation. Since 1864, Yosemite has been an archetype for the preservation of scenic places through their development as public parks."

Finally, the National Register nomination underscores the valley's historic integrity:

"Despite changes in the character of the valley landscape since the 1850s, and additional minor changes since the end of the period of significance in 1942, the overall integrity of the Yosemite Valley historic district is exceptional."

Yosemite Valley Historic Vlaues are River-Related: There can be no doubt that the historical significance of Yosemite Valley reaches the threshold for the inclusion of Historical Values among the Merced River's ORVs. Indeed, even the Planning Workbook's unnecessarily high bar of "truly exceptional qualitites" is met. But in addition to being rare, unique, or exemplary, the Wild and Scenic River Act states that ORVs must also be "river-related or dependent." Specifically, the December 1999 Wild & Scenic River Study Process Techincal Report states that they should:

1) Be located in the river or on its immediate shorelands (generally within 1/4 mile on either side of the river); 2) Contribute substantially to the function of the river ecosystem; and/or 3) Owe their location or existence to the presence of the river (13).

Once again, Yosemite Valley meets the standard. According to the National Register nomination:

"Within the boundaries of the Yosemite Valley historic district, the Merced River and associated riverine corridor are the primary natural systems that have historically shaped the built environment of Yosemite Valley. Although the river corridor itself has fluctuated as a result of both natural and human influences throughout the period of significance, it continues to physically deefine the character of the valley landscape, and contributes to defining the significance and character of the cultural

landscape."

Clearly, the cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley could never have come into being without the Merced River, thus meeting the third bullet point. As for proximity, the district actually encompasses the river from Mirror Lake and Nevada Fall down to Pohono Bridge.

Special Relevance of Historic Bridges: A significant component of the historic district is the circulation system, which the National Register nomination states retains integrity, and whose "associated features are still intact and contribute to the significance of the cultural landscape." Among the defining features of the system are the bridges, which "have been a major component of the cultural landscape of the Yosemite Valley from the first years of Euro-American settlement."

The significance of the bridge is underscored by the fact that eight bridges (the 1922 Yosemite Creek Bridge; the 1928 Pohono, Ahwahnee, Sugar Pine, Clarks, and TEnaya Creek Bridges; the 1929 New Happy Isles Bridge; and the 1932 Stoneman Bridge) were individually listed in the National Register in 1977, three decades before the valley as a whole was lsited. In addition, the Yosemite Valley Historic District Valley nomination found El Capitan Bridge (1933) and Superintendent's Footbridge (1937), as well as a number of trail bridges to be contributing elements.

According to the Yosemite Valley Historic District nomination, "bridges have been a major component of the cultrual landscape of the Yosemite Valley from the first years of Euro-American settlement," and "are significant examples of state and national park development dating to the nationally significant Yosemite Valley Historic District, (and that eight of them are also individually listed) dramatically highlights how the failure to articulate a historic ORV is resulting in a flawed Wild and Scenic River planning process to date.

The bridges are in fact referenced a number of times in the Planning Workbook, but at no time is there historical significance recognized. For example, both Clarks Bridge and "El Cap" Bridge are highlighted in a discussion of ecological and natural resources values and the management of large woody debris, but without noting their listing in the National Register, nor why any acknowledgement that the management decisions under discussion might direclty affect these historic resources.

Perhaps most glaring of all, even where the complete removal of historical resources is discussed (as in the case with Sugar Pine Bridge and Ahwahnee Bridge under the heading "Land Uses and Associated Developments"), there is no mention that doing so would both destroy historic resources that contribute to a nationally significant historic district and would raise a significant management conflict for the NPS. To promote a public conversation involving the potential destruction of historical resources without an acknowledgement of either their historical values, or of the National Park Service's mandate to preserve and protect these resources, is simply irresponsible.

Conclusion: Today, the National Park Service finds itself in a familiar situation, one that is articulated in the Yosemite Valley Historic District National Register nomination:

"Yosemite Valley continues to be an intact and always controversial experiment - one that began within only a few years of the arrival of Euro-Americans in the valley - of preserving a "natural" landscape through its development and management as a public park."

Management of Yosemite will continue to be controversial, but what the National Trust stated in a March 2000 comment letter on the draft Yosemite Valley Plan still remains true today:

"There are many opportunities to preserve and enhance the natural resources without compromising the Valley's unique historical legacy. A prudent Valley Plan will seek to protect those natural and cultural resources that make Yosemite Valley unique while maximizing long-term management options. The best vision for the future of Yosemite Valley is one that strives to preserve its resources while demonstrating restraint and balance."

In the nearly twelve years since we offered those comments, the National Park Service has formally recognized that the cultural landscape of Yosemite Valley is a nationally significant historic resource. It is essential that the NPS's stewardship of that landscape reflect that reality.

We urge the National Park Service to treat the Yosemite Valley Historic District and all of its contributing features as the Outstandingly Remarkable Values they are by 1) adding "Historic Values" to the ORVs addressed in the Merced River Plan, and 2) amending the Merced River Plan Goals to explicitly included protection of historic resources.

We look forward to continuing in our role as a consulting party to the Programmatic Agreement to assure the preservation of Yosemite's rich historical legacy. Please continue to notify us as the Merced Wild and Scenic River planning process moves forward.

Correspondence ID: 244 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form

Correspondence:

How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function? -Remove fallen, submerged trees in portions of river Segments 2.1 & 2.2. Use natural alternatives to rip rap where increased water flow is required.

How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -Please do not use fences which impede wildlife movement; consider using seasonal, moveable wooden boardwalks and changing their orientation yearly across meadows.

Which areas are a high priority for ecological function? -Riverbank at Sentinel Beach raft take-out is highly compromised.

How can we conserve our limited water supply? Reduce privately-owned rental homes at The Redwoods/Wawona; buy up as available and convert to employee quarters as appropriate.

What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality? -Local Valley sewage system must be scrupulously maintained including pumping relay stations to avoid spills into groundwater. Rest room facilitates must be added back in any restored campgrounds.

What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic resources? -Continue to work with Tribal groups/Buffalo Soldiers/early settler reps. Do an inventory of important sites for management. Do Not Fence Off!

How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? -Please allow un-managed, non-commercial quiet enjoyment & interaction e.g. swimming, wadding, water play, and sitting just watching the river flow by.

If the NPS were to experience existing parking inventory, by how much at which locations would be appropriate? -Cluster parking just off paved roads on permeable surface lots at camp extensions, trail heads and near visitor serving facilities such as Camp 6; large RVs outside of Valley please!

Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? -Current buses are especially difficult to get off of for Seniors; no hand grabs for that final BIG step off the bus; risk of being pushed to ground by younger exiting visitors. Dangerous!

Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? -Yes, for day use; No for overnight lodging or camping--too much gear to bring in and Seniors can't carry it to camping/lodging once off the shuttle.

If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -"1-day use" vs. overnight lodging and camping use for extended days, yes. Families that drive up just for a day of playing in the Valley and leave that evening. Reduce the entry fee for them and issue a day use parking permit hang tag for a small extra fee.

What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? -Well-signed access points. Restrooms. Bear boxes. Trash containers.

How can the NPS support the current mix of day use and overnight visitors? -Restore Rivers Camps as "drive-through, drop off" camps with clustered parking in walking distance and one group campfire at night from dusk to 9:30 PM for smoke reduction.

How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that the river values are protected? -Lower impact drive-through, drop off camps (think airport white zones) no fire rings or picnic tables; campers can cook and use camp chairs and small tables they bring in; tents only.

What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor? -Either open the Curry and Lodge swimming pools to everyone or remove them. Restore saddle trips around the Valley floor loop entirely to support stables services.

How can we consolidate functions to increase the efficiency of administrative land use in Yosemite Valley? -Relocate more employee housing and administration to new quarters in Mariposa.

How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs associated with visitor and resource protection are met? -Stop emphasizing the outdoor classroom and commercial concepts. Allow people to engage the river, the wildlife, the environment quietly without being herded into class and tour groups. That is a canned experience and they're not having fun.

Expand North, Upper and Lower Pines; allow same day drive up reservations to fill last-minute cancellations. Computerize all same day camping reservations so vacancies can be filled for every camping type.

El Portal Shell gas station needs to be manned 24 hours with full tanks, working card sweeps and pump handles since this is

nearest place to fill-up from Mariposa to Valley floor. They're doing a lousy job! Better yet, put back the Chevron station at Camp Curry. Running out of gas on these roads is dangerous to everyone and you don't do a good public relations education to visitors prior to their arriving in the Valley with empty gas tanks. Please correct this!

Wawona Campground is hot, dusty and miserable. Re-landscape with native plants and vegetation, especially trees for shade. Cluster box RVs closets to hwy.

User conflicts between hikers, backpackers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders mainly focus on the first 3 user groups' distaste for sharing the trail with manure. However, the (weed free) dried hay in the manure disperses into the trail bed and helps to stabilize it by adding fibrous material to the base; especially necessary in wet weather. Wheel ruts from mountain bikers, on the other hand, cause trail erosion and deterioration. Prior to issuing wilderness use permits for this area, why not educate users about the conditions they will encounter. Disclosing this upfront gives them the chance to opt for another high country trail with fewer user conflicts.

I was unaware of any river use behind the Wawona Hotel. If you plan to disperse visitors for rafting and white water kayaking into other than the Segment 2 area, please do a better job of suggesting alternatives in the Visitor Guide and online. I was also unaware of hiking trails along the South Fork or of the "impoundment" which sounds like a place where you put the wildlife up for adoption, but is apparently a dam of some kind? Why is there a dam there? Is this to provide drinking water to THE Redwoods and visitor serving facilities in Wawona such as the Hotel and the golf course? It's hard to justify asking for water conservation of Merced River water when it's quite visibly playing out over a golf course...

Mother Nature provides a regular flushing mechanism along these portions of the Merced. Where new or renewed infrastructure for camping and river access is to be installed, keeping that infrastructure to a low-impact minimum utilizing a balance of best practices with best visitor enjoyment opportunities is necessary. Sewage disposal, garbage mgmt. & education about refraining from leaving balls of tinfoil, floss picks, & plastic toys behind to NOT biodegrade is necessary.

Remove the need to channel every visitor's experience into "education" or paid "recreation." Foreign tour groups boarding buses at The Lodge have had a completely "canned" experience and they aren't happy about it--their faces reflect that and comments they make to me are in the "What's so good about Yosemite?" vein. How sad! Stop herding people around! Give them an access point where they can take off their shoes and wade into the river; give them box lunches for a picnic at river's edge.

Please allow visitors to simply BE by the river. After Labor Day, I witnessed many Seniors sitting in camp chairs, watching the river flow by. Some were chatting or reading but many were just "communing" with the river and teh Valley - some for hours at a time. Yes, they weren't being educated, or paying to use resources. They had come to Yosemite to interact with the total environment and they were having a wonderful time!

Low impact but accessible. Eco-friendly options that aren't permanently affixed to the ground were they can be wept away in the 100 year flood. Please be prudent in removing Housekeeping Camp units since young families and Seniors utilize this camp in force. It has a place in the camping hierarchy just as Camp 4 does. All age and economic groups need to be welcome. As you remove Camp Curry cabins in the rockfall zone (please do it quickly) find all-season lodging elsewhere in the Valley.

The theme and commonality is a return to simpler enjoyment of the river and the Valley with increased, low-impact camping and transit options for Seniors that take their reduced mobility and limited carrying ability into consideration. I'm not talking about ADA wheelchair access but the AARP seniors with bad backs, hips, knees and vision who still want to camp: to cook outdoors, sleep in the fresh air and hear the birds singing in the morning and to do it in the beauty of Yosemite Valley. We're Sierra Club, Yosemite Conservancy dues paying long-time Yosemite campers (who also like lunch at The Ahwahnee and can afford it) and we don't want to be marginalized into motel rooms or canvas tents. We want a campfire...and we want it NOW! Thanks for listening.

Correspondence ID: 245 **Project:** 18982 **Document:** 43850
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Dec,29,2011 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: How can we protect and restore free-flowing conditions and hydrologic function? -Maintain log removal.

How should we protect and restore meadow and riparian habitat? -Boardwalks could be built through some meadows. Non-native vegetation removal. Use of bioengineered stabilization and engineered controls.

Which areas are a high priority for ecological restoration? -Meadows.

How can we conserve our limited water supply? -Public education.

What best management practices must be in place to protect water quality? -Public education. Some sort of filtering [unreadable] (gravel, rocks) between roads and the river to filter out oils from road. Engineered controls.

What measures should be taken to continue to protect cultural resource integrity, including archeological and ethnographic

resources? -As is suggested in the plan, where possible, stabilize archeological remains and minimize/manage visitor use appropriately as in the cemetery in Yosemite Village. Use well delineated pathways with volunteers/docents to inform and monitor.

How can we ensure that people have opportunities to experience quality connections to the river in ways that are protective of the river? -Education. Signs with international symbols. Reminders inserted into mulitmedia tour products. Lots of volunteers to watch out over areas similar to camp hosts.

If the NPS were to expand the existing parking inventory, by how much and at which locations would be appropriate? -It may be appropriate to expand in the Happy Isles area where the shuttles are based. Expanding in the valley would only add to the crowding. Also possible expansion in Yosemite Village/Ahwahnee area.

Would you support bus services along new routes into the park? If there were such services, would you use them? -I don't think I would support services in new routes. We visit by camping on multiple trips for several days. We drive into the Valley occasionally and park and walk where we need to go. We camp OUTSIDE the valley.

Would you support remote parking and shuttle services? -I support shuttle services after parking and moving to/from trail heads, stores, stables, the shuttle service in place is excellent.

If day use vehicular access were to be limited, are day use reservations appropriate? -Absolutely! If you are entering the park for day use only, you should have to take the time/effort to get a reservation. Of course, that would have to be plentiful and easy to obtain so a spur of the moment trip could still be accomplished. Those who are camping would be exempt from this.

What types of recreation are appropriate in the river corridor? -Hiking, swimming, rafting, fishing. Reconfiguration of existing facilities and visitor education are key to supporting these activities.

How can the NPS support the current mix of day use and overnight visitation? -I think it's manged pretty well right now. Campground reservations work well. Your 20$ entrance fee is appropriate and existing facilities more or less work pretty well. Renovating exsiting parking would be helpful.

How can we increase the availability of camping while ensuring that the river values are protected? -I don't feel that adding camping in the valley would assure that the river values would be protected. The view is NO NEW CAMPING IN THE VALLEY!! New camping OUTSIDE the valley may be appropriate.

What types of services and amenities are necessary to provide for both resources protection and management of user capacity in the Merced Wild and Scenic River corridor? -I believe your current system of permits is sufficient. It still only gets so crowded. Expected growth is inevitable. By that I mean that in the wilderness, those who you meet generally share the same ecological values and the environment is spared the foolishness of amatures!

How can we prioritize land use for visitors while still ensuring operational needs assocaited with visitor and resource protection are met? -A common sense approach is needed. Such as with rafts, and [unreadable]. Someone has to engage the number of vessels and limit the area they operate in. You just can't have them floating everwhere in huge numbers. It's no Disnyland or Ragin' Waters. It's a National Park. Using maintained trails, existing parking, and educating those who use them would go a long way to maintaining a natural setting. At some point it becomes a matter of people managing people. Whether its paid park service employees or volunteers. Where people can't be used, signs work well.

As you've done in several meadows, boardwalks and viewing platforms accomplish all the goals you need. They provide access while maintaining a natural condition. These should be built and maintained wherever there is a question, wherever needed. These are a best management practice. Because of recreational use i.e. swimming, rafting, you do need to maintain the flow of logs. The integrity of bridges is also reliant on this. Not developing any new campgrounds along the river will help restoring the flood plain. Also, restricting any new parking facilities to the Happy Isles area would be helpful to the ecology of the river. People are going to walk along a river for many different reasons, so long as they don't trample through a meadow to get to it, I don't think access should be denied!

From parks like Gettysburgh, Valley Froge, the Alamo, Grand Canyon and Ground Zero, people are going to want to connect with sacred places. Common sense management with some park personel are all that's needed to maintain integrity of values. The public needs to be educated in respect of those values. Educate the public where possible. Fliers, leaflets and vlunteers could be used for this. Where necessary, fences or complete prohibition of access could be used. There's x amount of square miles in the park. Prohibiting access to some areas should be acceptable.

My main concern would be that NO NEW CAMPING sites are establisehd in the valley. Prehaps new possibilities could be found outside the valley. It seems to me that most people coming for day use are not interested in camping, they either come by tour bus or private vehicle. Just to experience the wonders of the valley. They don't need campsites. Reconfiguration for efficiency of existing picnic and parking facilities would also be in the best interests of all. I don't believe that adding new parking along the main road in and out of the valley would be wise. It would take away from the natural scenery and add to clutter in the valley. If parking were to be added anywhere, it would have to be in the Happy Isles, Yosemite Village, Ahwahnee rea where shuttles to other valley locations could be used. As it sits currently, the east end of the valley is where facilitites are

concentrated. All new growth should be concentrated there, moderately and efficiently.

I believe the only area of the Valley that could sustain any kind of structural development is the area near the Happy Isles parking area. And the only structural growth I think it could handle would be for parking. Concentrating parking and adminstrative facilitites in this area was a good idea to begin with and is still a good idea today. Existing parking places and roadside pullouts should be left alone. They allow for freedom in spur of the moment opportunities, such as viewing a familiar site from a different view or at a different time of day. Sponteneity is enhanced when there are places to pull off.

The commonality that exists in my vision is that, for the most park, existing facilities work. That is to say, the parking areas are right wehre they need to be. They just need to be desinged more efficiently. Picnic areas as well. Some new boardwalks need to be built to avoid trampling meadows. I DON'T BELIVE THAT NEW CAMPGROUNDS AHOULD BE PART OF THE VALLEY'S FUTURE! All new camping whould be directed outside the valley (possibly) or ouside of the park. The visiting public needs to be educated in using the park and maintaining the ecological balance. Pathways need to be used, consideration needs to be used while parking or hiking or picnicing. Rules and boundaries need to be observed. Prior planning by the public would go a long way in helping the park. Reservations and permits should be used where possible I certainly belive this could be implemented. Money would be necessary for some of my suggestions while common sense (or human monitoring) would be all that was needed for my others. It's all very realistic.