

Cultural

Outstandingly Remarkable Value

The continuum of human use along the Merced River and South Fork Merced River encompasses thousands of years, a diversity of people and cultures, and a variety of uses. Historic/cultural landscapes, historic structures, and archeological resources along the rivers reflect trade, travel, and settlement patterns from prehistory to present-day. Prehistoric, historic, and modern American Indian uses of the park form a long continuum of cultural, traditional, and spiritual uses and veneration for the area.

Supporting evidence and examples of the Cultural ORV include, but are not limited to:

- Trails along the Merced River served as primary routes for trade and cultural exchange between the Great Basin to the east and the California coastal areas to the west for thousands of years. The location and form of the Merced River watershed structured these trade and transportation routes.
- Cultural landscapes reflect the evolution of the human footprint, such as bridges, historic buildings, campgrounds, trails, and the associated spatial and circulation patterns within the natural environment.
- Archeological sites reflect eons of human use and cultural evolution in relation to the river. These resources include prehistoric and historic American Indian villages and camps, and historic ruins.
- American Indians assign strong spiritual values to the river, and to the Yosemite Valley through which it flows, continuing their sense of place and cultural association with the river that is both a destination and a place of refuge. American Indians have attached names and stories to geologic and other special features in the Merced River corridor, and consider many of these to be sacred or spiritual. American Indians maintain their rights to practice their religion and ceremonies as they have for thousands of years.



J.T. Boysen, Yosemite National Park research library

Sadie (in cradleboard) and Suzie McGowan in Yosemite Valley in 1901



Yosemite National Park research library

American Indian tribes in Yosemite pounded acorns into rock mortars to process them into food



Ralph Anderson, Yosemite National Park research library

The covered bridge in Wawona was built by Galen Clark in 1868 as an open truss span, and was covered in about 1875