



Yosemite National Park Meeting Minutes

Meeting Reference

Group/Committee/Etc.: Merced (and South Fork Merced) Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement; Public Planning Workshop

Date of Meeting: Friday, March 7, 2008 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Purpose of Meeting: Review the Draft Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) Report (February 2008); Develop draft desired condition statements for the ORVs

Prepared By: Chris Geis, Administrative Assistant
Elexis Mayer, Project Manger

Date: Monday, March 17, 2008

Meeting Participants

Public Planning Workshop Participants:

Jim Brohm, Coarsegold resident
 John Modin, El Dorado Hills resident
 Ed Mee, Wawona Town Planning Advisory Committee
 Roger Soulanille, Wawona Area Property Owners Association
 Mary Lou Soulanille, Wawona Area Property Owners Association
 George Whitmore, Fresno resident
 Matt Voss, California Department of Transportation
 David Underwood, Sacramento resident
 Don Pense, Atascadero resident
 Anna Pense, Atascadero resident
 Ron Mackie, Oakhurst resident
 Joshua Stark, National Park Conservation Association
 Warren Parks, Mariposa resident
 Brian Ouzounian, Co-Founder, Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition
 Colin Baldock, Manager of Guest Recreation, Delaware North Company
 Stan Peterson, Mariposa resident
 Tom Rohrer, New Mexico, USA
 Jay Timbrell, (unknown)

National Park Service Planning Team:

Linda Dahl, Chief, Planning
 Jen Nersesian, Management Assistant to Superintendent/Branch Chief, Public Involvement & Outreach
 Elexis Mayer, Project Manager, Planning
 Teri Tucker, Compliance Specialist for Merced River Plan
 Pam Meierding, Public Outreach Specialist/Division of Interpretation planning team representative
 Charles Cuvelier, Deputy Chief Ranger/Visitor and Resource Protection planning team representative
 Chris Geis, Administrative Assistant, Environmental Planning and Compliance

Meeting Agenda

Welcome/Introductions/Workshop Objectives
 Review of Upcoming Planning and Public Participation Milestones
 Presentation and Discussion of the Draft Outstandingly Remarkable Values
 LUNCH BREAK
 Range of Desired Conditions Exercise
 Feedback & Closing Remarks

Meeting Minutes

Welcome – Participants were thanked for taking the time to join the National Park Service at the planning table for the second, in a series of, Public Planning Workshops. The National Park Service is endeavoring to create a Merced River Plan for the third time, which is why the Public Planning Workshop series is critical to this planning process' success.

The purposes of the Public Planning Workshops are to: (1) share National Park Service planning policy and guidance, (2) provide an opportunity for the public to work alongside the National Park Service in creating each element of the new Merced River Plan, (3) objectively discuss and deliberate the range of public scoping comments which inform decision making, and (4) provide an opportunity for input and open dialogue among stakeholders and staff to gain an of planning in the National Park Service, within the constraints of laws, policies, and public opinion.

The two planning objectives for this workshop were: (1) to review and discuss the draft Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) developed by the National Park Service, in consultation with American Indian Tribes, and experts from other agencies, and (2) develop draft desired condition statements for the Merced River's ORVs through an interactive exercise. The first Public Planning Workshop was held on Saturday, October 6, 2007, in the Yosemite Valley. Its objective was to review the range of scoping comments received during all three previous public scoping periods conducted for Merced River Plans; 1999, 2004, and most recently 2007.

The workshop began to deliberate the foundational plan elements, ORVs. Additionally, participants initiated the discussion about the range of management prescriptions that could be implemented within the river corridor, which begins with creating a range of desired conditions for the ORVs. A series of presenters and facilitators led the groups through these discussions.

Introductions – Participants introduced themselves. There were a number of participants who were not at the first Public Planning Workshop.

- ❖ Ed Mee – Born in Yosemite Valley, Chair of the Wawona Town Planning Advisory Committee and have been an active member in Wawona planning issues, member of Mariposa County's Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), not at the last workshop.
- ❖ Roger Soulanille – Southern California resident and Wawona property owner, member of the Wawona Area Property Owners Association, and was not at the last workshop.
- ❖ Mary Lou Soulanille – Roger's wife and been going to Wawona Area Property Owners Association meetings for 15 years; was not at the last workshop.
- ❖ John Modin – Has been actively working on Yosemite issues for many years, and attended the last workshop.
- ❖ David Underwood – Actively involved in transportation issues and attended all of the 1997 and 1998 Yosemite Valley Plan public meetings, has written a critique on transportation issues in Yosemite Valley which was submitted to the project manager as part of the public record; was not at the last workshop.
- ❖ Teri Tucker – Works for the National Park Service and serves as the Compliance Specialist for the new Merced River Plan's environmental impact statement, was not at the previous workshop.
- ❖ George Whitmore – Attended the last workshop and many others for decades, here to see a good

plan is developed.

- ❖ Jim Brohm – Attended the last workshop and many others, including the User Capacity Symposium; impressed with how the park is handling environmental issues and has seen a lot done since the 1950's and 1960's.
- ❖ Matt Voss – Project Manger for CalTrans and here to gain insight on how the park is addressing Wild and Scenic River Act issues; was not at the last workshop.
- ❖ Linda Dahl, Jen Nersesian, and Pam Meierding each introduced their position with the park. Jen noted she would be taking photographs of today's meeting for the purposes of capturing photos the National Park Service would like to use for informational materials such as the quarterly Planning Update. If there were any objections to people having their picture taken, participants should let her know.
- ❖ Don Pense – Atascadero resident, and member of Yosemite Valley Camper's Coalition and concerned with the loss of family camping in Yosemite Valley; was not at the last workshop.
- ❖ Brian Ouzounian – Co-founder of the Yosemite Valley Camper's Coalition and has been coming to meetings for 28 years. Stated it was important to note that many prominent people from the last workshop were not here for one main reason; the National Park Service did not tell participants from the last workshop that they were assisting the National Park Service with a court ordered process. Specifically, in the February 2008, Progress Report submitted to the District Court, the October 2007, Public Planning Workshop was identified as having taken place. Participants at the last workshop were not informed that information would be submitted to the court, and is therefore potentially the reason why they chose to not participate in this workshop. It is important for the National Park Service to be transparent. The October 6, 2007, meeting notes did not reflect the intent or content of the submission of the 1500 signature petition from the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition.

Linda Dahl clarified that all public meetings are part of the public record and the administrative record for the project; the Public Planning Workshops are public meetings, and therefore part of the public record.. Furthermore, the Public Planning Workshop series is a National Park Service idea to improve the planning process to make it more transparent and inclusive; these workshops were submitted as part of the original timeline presented to the District Court and have always been expectation of the District Court. The names of participants were not submitted to the judge; only a statement indicating that the workshop took place and was attended by “plaintiffs, the Sierra Club, elected officials from local county governments, and members of the general public.”

It was noted that in that same February 2008, Progress Report submitted to the District Court, there were two government partner meetings. The public was not invited to these meeting.

Elexis Mayer clarified that the National Park Service often holds internal, Agency and Tribal Consultation meetings. American Indian tribes are sovereign governments, whom the National Park Service consults with regularly. Tribal councils are invited to participate in every public meeting as well, however their absence in this Public Planning Workshop does not indicate their absence in the planning and decision making process.

It was reiterated that some people were not participating because the National park Service is not being transparent.

Linda Dahl again clarified that all meetings conducted by the National Park Service are part of the

public record and those meeting minutes can be made available; however not all meeting minutes will be posted to the park's web site.

Brian stated he was attending the Public Planning Workshop to make sure that family-friendly, car camping, is fully represented in the new Merced River Plan.

- ❖ Anna Pense – Don's wife and here for the same reason, concerned about family camping, spent many years camping in Yosemite Valley with family and cannot do it anymore; tried to make reservations and couldn't get in; was not at the last workshop.
- ❖ Ron Mackie – Thanked the National Park Service for hosting these planning sessions and is very supportive of the park's position to have input from everyone, and not just locals. It is important that there are opportunities for people who live close to the park to have access; not at the last workshop.
- ❖ Joshua Stark – National Park Conservation Association; not at the last workshop though have been participating in the Planner for a Day workshops for the Tuolumne River Plan effort.
- ❖ Warren Parks – New to the mountains, and Mariposa. Attending the workshop to get acquainted with what is going on in the park and to get to know new people; not at the last workshop.

Agenda & Workshop Objectives – The workshop agenda and the workshop objectives (below) were reviewed:

- ❖ Review upcoming, major planning and public participation milestones for the plan.
- ❖ Present and discuss the draft Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) for the Merced and South Fork Merced Wild and Scenic Rivers.
- ❖ Explore the range of different desired conditions (that is, resource and visitor experiences to be achieved in the future). Discuss why having different management goals for ORVs in different locations is a critical decision-making component of this plan, and how those decisions are made.

The purpose of the Merced River Plan is to develop a land use planning tool that will amend the 1980 General Management Plan, and define a management vision for the Merced River corridor for the next 20 years. During this workshop, participants began to dive into the core of the planning elements for the Merced River Plan; the Outstandingly Remarkable Values and what the goals are for those values in the future.

The Draft Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) Report (February 2008) was presented. The criterion for defining ORVs, in accordance with Wild and Scenic River Act's guidance, was reviewed. Participants were asked to give verbal feedback today on the draft ORVs; however comments will be accepted throughout the entire planning process. After lunch, participants were asked to develop future goals for these ORV through the processed of draft desired condition statements.

Upcoming Planning and Public Participation Milestones – A current planning milestone calendar was distributed to all participants, and noted it was posted on the project's website.

A question regarding the history and status of the current litigation was asked; resulting in the following information being provided. Linda Dahl provided the abridged version of the litigation history.

A question regarding the availability of this workshop's minutes was posed; the previous workshop notes

from October 2007, were made available in February 2008. It was noted that the October 2007 meeting had the wrong date and that the flip chart photos from that meeting were not on the web site. Elexis Mayer committed to having the Draft meeting minutes circulated to the participants for review and made available on the web site by the end of March 2008.

Participants were walked through the *current milestone calendar*, which identifies the upcoming planning and public participation milestones. It was noted that because planning is a dynamic and iterative process, these dates are subject to fine tuning. Although the planning process sets out a very aggressive timeline in order to meet the court ordered deadline for issuing a Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and Record of Decision (the final decision documents) by September 2009, each stage of the decision making process is interspersed with Public Planning Workshops.

The current milestone calendar was reviewed. The National Park Service is looking for feedback on conflicting dates with the scheduled Public Planning Workshops in order to maximize participation. After each workshop, the National Park Service's Core Planning Team incorporates the results/outputs/meeting notes into consideration during internal meetings. Thus, the results of each Public Planning Workshop are infused with National Park Service planning. The following items were highlighted:

- ❖ In February 2008, the National Park Service hosted a User Capacity Symposium in Yosemite Valley that garnered national participation. The purpose of the symposium was to bring together national experts, academics, land managers, tribes, elected officials, and the general public together for three days of learning and dialogue about user capacity. The National Park Service is preparing symposium proceedings which will soon be available; however, in the meantime, information about the presenters, including their PowerPoint presentations, is available on the park's web site at: <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/symposium.htm>.
- ❖ Looking ahead, the month of March 2008, will be devoted to developing a range of desired conditions and initiating management prescriptions.
- ❖ During April 2008, alternative management zoning concepts will be developed. The range of desired conditions for the ORVs will be bundled into complementary goal groupings to take the form of management prescriptions. The management prescriptions can be thought of as the "pallet of paints" we will use to paint the corridor; also known as creating management zones. To be clear, the management prescriptions developed for the plan will be the same across all alternatives. The alternatives will primarily vary in how and where the management prescriptions will be applied. The different application of management prescriptions is what will create different management zoning concepts.
- ❖ In May 2008, the National Park Service will be preparing a Preliminary Concepts Workbook presenting the results of the draft management zoning concepts. Brian Ouzounian noted that the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition should be very interested in management zoning because it plays an important role in securing camping.
- ❖ During the months of June and July 2008, the Preliminary Concepts Workbook will be out for public review and comment (though the comment period will not be a formal comment period such as a comment period for a draft environmental impact statement). The National Park Service plans to host weekly site visits and information sessions about the workbook, which are yet to be determined.
- ❖ In August 2008, the results of the comments received on the workbook will be incorporated and we will develop full fledged alternatives. These alternatives will consist of both written descriptions and maps, to be analyzed in the environmental impact statement (EIS).

- ❖ In September 2008, a preferred alternative will be selected by the National Park Service.
- ❖ During the months of October and November 2008, the National Park Service will be working with our environmental compliance contractor to analyze the impacts of the alternatives and produce a draft plan/EIS.
- ❖ The draft plan/EIS will be released for public review and comment during the months of January and February 2009. The National Park Service will be conduct review and comment public meetings during this period and during the refinement of the preferred alternative as a result of public comment; however these dates have not been determined yet.
- ❖ The remaining milestones set the schedule for production and distribution of the Final EIS and the Record of Decision (ROD).

The major plan element decisions will be analyzed in the draft plan/EIS, will be made between the months of March through September 2008.

It was noted at that the National Park Service will be making materials and exercises available on the web site, so that people who cannot physically participate in these workshops, will still have an opportunity for input. These Public Planning Workshops provide an opportunity for open dialogue about the planning challenges and generation of possible solutions; it is important that people throughout the country who care about planning in Yosemite National park have the same opportunity to participate as the folks who live within driving distance and can attend these workshops. Everyone has a different opinion about how the National Park Service should manage Yosemite. These Public Planning Workshops afford participants an opportunity to grapple with a wide range of diverse public opinions.

Question and Answers – The following are questions generated during general questions:

- ❖ Availability of User Capacity Symposium results – Addressed above in milestones review.
- ❖ Regarding transportation and where it fits into the Merced River Plan – Transportation will be part of the visitor experience discussion, though transportation solutions or implementation strategies will not be addressed in the Merced River Plan. For example, the Merced River Plan will call for the type of acceptable transportation experiences, and the Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan which will take its guidance from the Merced River Plan and the Tuolumne River Plan will describe specifically how to achieve the desired conditions.
- ❖ At the October 2007, Public Planning Workshop, Brian Ouzounian submitted a package of petitions to the National Park Service about camping and suggested that the National Park Service use it as one source to pull from in order to gain an understanding from those who cannot make it to these workshops.

The meeting minutes from October 2007, stated that the petitions received stated that because the petitions were not received during the formal scoping period, they were not part of the official Public Scoping Report for the Merced River Plan (October 2007). Brian objects to these meeting minutes.

Linda Dahl reiterated that these meetings are coined “Planner for a Day” because it is not about what people as individuals want, but rather putting oneself in the shoes of the National Park Service and taking into consideration the wide range of public opinions. One comment counts just as much as numerous of the same comments, they all have to be considered. These

workshops require that everyone gain familiarity with the park's legislation, National Park Service law and policy, other guiding laws and policies, and the range of public comments. Within that context, participants help develop a range of alternative ways to manage Yosemite.

- ❖ A suggestion was made to have each of the ORV categories have a separate link on the park's web site, in addition to having the entire report available. This way, people can go directly to the ORV they are interested in and make a comment. It would be good to see what other people are saying about the ORVs; there should be a mechanism for providing comments via the web site.

BREAK

Draft Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) Review – Pam Meierding serves as a Public Outreach Specialist for the park and as a member of the National Park Service's planning team as the representative from the Division of Interpretation. One of her primary roles is to make plans and graphics more understandable to the public. She noted that she has read the 1999, 2004, and 2007 Public Scoping Reports in their entirety, as well as every single 2007 public scoping letter.

In 1987, Congress designated the Merced Wild and Scenic River. The National Park Service is responsible for managing 81 miles of the Merced and South Fork Merced Rivers, which includes the El Portal Administrative Site.

The initial step in the planning process for a Wild and Scenic River is to identify the ORVs, which are the river-related/river-dependent values that are rare, unique or exemplary on a regional or national context. The National Park Service draws upon the 1998 Interagency Council on Wild and Scenic Rivers Guideline's which states in order for a river to be designated as Wild and Scenic, it must be free-flowing and have at least one ORV.

The Draft ORV Report (February 2008) is the culmination of over a decade of deliberation on the ORVs. Because the National Park Service has initiated a new planning process for the Merced River, the ORVs were reviewed with fresh eyes, and as a result some changes have been made such as:

- ❖ ORVs are now described corridor-wide to describe the inner-relatedness of many of these values; rather than identifying ORVs for each individual segment of the river as was done in the 2005 version of the ORVs. The planning team noticed duplication of ORVs across segments in that approach.
- ❖ Two broad categories of ORVs were determined; Natural Values and Socio-cultural Values. Under the Natural Values, the Geologic Processes, Hydrologic Processes, and Biological ORVs are described. Under Socio-cultural Values, the Cultural, Scenic, and Recreational ORVs are described.
- ❖ In terms of how the report is structured, each ORV statement to shown in the larger text on the left. The column on the right provides illustrative examples of elements of the ORV, and photos are provided to clarify or explain certain things such as "the giant stair-case" in the Geological Processes ORV or the scenic grandeur described in the Scenic ORV.

The Natural Values were presented, and then each ORV was discussed individually. Following the discussion and capturing of feedback on flip charts, the Socio-cultural Values were presented, and then discussed individually. The following depicts the discussion of the ORVs by each category:

Natural Values

- ❖ Water quality should be mentioned as part of the Hydrologic Processes ORV or as part of the

over-arching Natural Values since it relates to all of the natural ORVs—the geology helped create the water quality and the riparian species depend on the high quality water. Water quality contributes to the reason why it is used for agriculture in the Central Value, and why people want to camp near and play/float/raft in the river. Some argued that the type of water quality in the Merced River was not unique, and that many other Sierra Nevada rivers have comparable water quality.

- ❖ A complete list of Special Status Species should be included in the Biological ORV statement, and denoted as California special status or park special status. What about bat species, should they be included? To provide context, there are other laws that direct the National Park Service to protect rare, threatened, or endangered species (such as the Endangered Species Act) and how these laws relate to the management actions take to protect and enhance the ORVs should be described in the EIS. It was conceded that it might be fine to cite a reference to the EIS for a more inclusive look at the special-status species. The National Park Service agreed to look into whether a bat species should be included in the ORV specific examples.
- ❖ Some concern was articulated over the non-recognition of how species habitat has been improved since 1864, and that the National Park Service needs to be fair and balanced when presenting the need to “enhance” species habit when compared to the actual threat to these species caused by the presence of humans. For example, camping near the river should not be constrained because the National Park Service plans to enhance species habitat for species that may never have existed in those locations before.

Elexis Mayer reminded the group that these are broad value statements and that the ORVs are what they are. Because the Merced River is rich in ORVs and there are inherent conflicts between some ORVs in the same area, choices regarding which ORV prevails will be addressed in the Merced River Plan. However, the descriptions of the ORVs are not the place that those choices are made – we make those choices during the management zoning process.

Socio – cultural Values

- ❖ Rock climbing should be included as an example under the Recreational ORV because of its dependence on the geologic processes, which are an ORV. How can a recreational activity, that is dependant on an ORV, not be an ORV too? Rock climbing in Yosemite is rare-and unique, and within the river corridor. It was also noted that rock climbing relates to the scenic ORV.

Linda Dahl noted that the park’s Management Team has recently completed a review and update of the park’s significance statements. Rock-climbing has been included. Brian Ouzonian stated that camping should be included in the significance statements because Lincoln wanted people to camp and it is one of the most popular activities in the park. Linda will bring it up to the Management Team.

A statement was made regarding the climbing community suing the National Park Service to get recognized, and a question posed as to whether the camping community needed to sue to become recognized.

- ❖ It was mentioned that the word “floating” was vague rather than clear and understandable. Use of the word “floating” versus “rafting” was preferred by some. There was a time no floating was allowed. When the rafting issue evolved into huge concessionaire activity that was extremely popular, some serious problems were seen happening on the river.
- ❖ Some stated they really liked the emphasis on hiking, which is the crux of the Recreational ORV and captured very well.

- ❖ Under the Recreation ORV, there is a statement about people being able to connect to the natural world, which is the level of description this ORV should stay at; not itemizing individual activities. Should one activity be left out because no one known about it yet, then when it comes along, people will not be able to do it? Also need to consider physical disabilities. Leave the statement broad, supporting examples ok, but say “diverse activities” in the actual ORV statement.
- ❖ The entire Yosemite Valley should be identified as an ORV. Fixation on ORVs within the ¼ mile boundary (which is an *average*) should not constrain thinking about the ORVs. The boundary should be adjusted to include the entire Yosemite Valley and make it tighter in the wilderness segments of the river corridor since these areas are already well protected. Activities outside of the river corridor could affect the ORVs and should be considered. The ORV report does not talk about Yosemite Valley being a world heritage site.

Elexis Mayer noted that there were flip charts around the room near the ORV presentation boards and that if people had more comments about the individual ORVs they were welcome to write them on the flip charts. Additionally, she reminded the group that the Merced River Plan’s focus is on the future, and not on the past, which is why the exercise after lunch will really give people an opportunity to start addressing management objective for the future.

LUNCH

After lunch the group was joined by Colin Baldock, Manager of Guest Recreation, Delaware North Company.

Based on the discussion about the ORVs and the Park Purpose and Significance, copies of the segment classification definitions were provided to the group (attached, and will be posted on the web site). In addition, participants were reminded that copies of the designation legislation, and guiding laws and policies were provided in the binder everyone received. Linda reviewed the inherent conflict set up in the National Park Service Organic Act legislation.

The Merced River Plan will guide the resolution between certain conflicts within the river corridor, which is why developing a range of desired conditions is a critical exercise to developing a range of good management prescriptions.

Range of Desired Conditions – Through the use of flip charts Linda described what desired conditions are, and how they feed into management prescriptions, and how those management prescriptions are ultimately applied to the river corridor in the form of management zones.

Every plan begins with a determination of how it is nested within the park’s Purpose and Significance. The exercise this afternoon on developing a range of desired conditions will start to determine what goals are beyond the scope of this plan, and/or are beyond what is appropriate for what we know about Yosemite National Park and the ORVs of the Merced River. Where are the sideboards, beyond which we would consider to be inappropriate for managing the river corridor.

For example: in the Tuolumne River Plan public scoping process, the National Park Service received a comment letter about the need for a full service hotel, in Tuolumne Meadows. When the team reviewed the park Purpose and Significance, the Tuolumne River ORVs, and the kind of place Tuolumne Meadows is (which is a jumping off point into the Yosemite Wilderness); the team determined that a full service hotel in Tuolumne Meadows was inappropriate, and beyond what should be considered in this plan.

Desired Conditions – Developing a range of desired conditions helps to establish these sorts of decision “boundaries” of what is acceptable. One end of the spectrum, regarding for example to type and extent of

interaction with other people, could be completely remote with very low encounter rates. The other end of the spectrum could be frequent interaction with others (like in a parking lot, or in front of the Visitor Center). Both are appropriate, but not everywhere in the river corridor.

The other aspect to consider, is that there may not be a direct correlation between freedom of movement (like in the wilderness where it is relatively unrestricted) and as close to pristine resource conditions (like what one would expect to see in the wilderness). There are some instances where freedom of movement could be very restricted (such as the boardwalk in Cook's Meadow) in order to achieve a more natural condition of the meadow (which is in the middle of Yosemite Valley).

Management Prescriptions – The management prescriptions that will be developed from this range of desired conditions drafted today will begin to make choices about which ORVs take precedence in certain areas. These management prescriptions will prescribe the actions necessary to achieve the desired conditions through the added element of addressing what types and levels of management actions and/or facilities would be required to achieve these desired conditions. We will develop management prescription in April 2008.

Management Zones – Management zoning will identify the appropriate locations for the different types of conditions to be achieved in the management prescriptions. Management zones will decide where things will occur, like camping. They will also identify the areas habitats need to be restored. Management zoning concepts will be developed in May 2008.

Drafting Desired Conditions Exercise – Teri Tucker described the exercise to the participants. Essentially, each person will create two desired condition statements for each ORV category. She reminded the group to think about the end points and challenge themselves to take all they know from the public scoping comments and the diversity of opinion out there, and come up with different desired conditions, even if they do not mirror your personal opinion.

Each desired condition statement was written on a single piece of 8 ½ x 11 sheet paper. Stations were set up around the room for each ORV category, with a quadrant made of masking tape beneath each heading. Once participants developed a set of statements, they were asked to post each piece of paper under the appropriate category. The purpose of the quadrant was to help participants sort their ideas; participants were encouraged to read the desired condition statement someone placed in the quadrant and determine how their statement differed. If it was similar, the statement was to be posted near another's statement, if different; then the statement was to be posted in a different part of the quadrant. The ultimate goal was for participants to use other participants' statements to gauge if their desired condition statement was different or similar. The first few statements posted under quadrants helped to define where follow-on statement would settle out. The resulting affect would be that a range of desired conditions would start to appear. For a visual, see attached photo of quadrants.

The group started with the Hydrological Processes ORV. After each participant was able to post two desired condition statements, the group gathered around the station to discuss whether the exercise was making sense and to quickly review some of the statements being developed to see if the exercise was achieving what it set out to do. The group quickly noticed that some of the statement was action oriented "how" statements; participants were encouraged to think big and goal oriented – focus on describing the type of conditions to be achieved in 20 years, rather than one possible action to achieve that condition.

For example, "take out fences along the river" is an action statement and when asked what type of *hydrologic processes* condition the participant wanted to achieve with that type of action, the response was one having to do with *allowing the rivers natural processes prevail and a recognition that riverbanks are naturally eroded by flooding*. It was suggested that this statement could be transformed into one that called for natural riverbank erosion and river processes to prevail. The action statement also had to do with not

wanting to keep people away from the river, similarly, it was suggested that the participant also create a desired condition about the type of visitor experience that would allow for freedom of access to the river without defined access points.

Because there were many “how” type of statements, the National Park Service planning team will attempt to translate what type of desired condition the action is trying to achieve. The results of the exercise and synthesis done by the National Park Service will be circulated to the participants for review, prior to posting the results of the workshop to the park web site.

Feedback & Closing Remarks – Participants were encouraged that this new planning process is taking a fresh look at everything. Rather than focusing on what people did not like in previous plan, energy should focus on how to take those issues and work toward positive change in this new process. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the workshop exercises and any additional contributions for the good of the whole, which included the following:

- ❖ A question regarding what the National Park Service will do if the 2005 Revised Merced River Plan is upheld in court – The National Park Service will stop the new planning effort, however, the information that has evolved out of this planning process will still be used by park management during implementation level planning.
- ❖ It was suggested that the National Park Service voluntarily rescind the Yosemite Valley Plan (YVP) — The National Park Service will continue to review the actions called for in the YVP, many actions would still require planning and public input. Additionally, many of the transportation related elements called for in the YVP will be re-analyzed in the Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan.
- ❖ Brian Ouzounian, on behalf of the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition requested for an accounting of the \$170 million in congressionally appropriated funds has been spent on flood damaged facilities.

Again, the question was raised as to why the American Indian tribes were not present at this public meeting – The park’s Historic Preservation Officer, and Native American liaison, Jeannette Simons has regular consultation sessions with all of the seven affiliated American Indian Tribes on all plans and projects. The tribes have been, and will continue to be consulted on the Merced River Planning process.

- ❖ Brian Ouzounian presented a book to the planning team (at no expense to the National Park Service) for inclusion in the public record, which chronicles the fifty year plus history of Yosemite Valley camping as an ORV of several families, including his own. The National Park Service stated the book would become part of the public record.
- ❖ How will the results of the workshop be shared with the participants – The Project Manager will email draft meeting notes and the results of the desired condition exercise to the participant for review the third week of March 2008. A review period will be afforded prior to posting results on the park web site. The results of the exercise conducted today, will serve as the basis for generating comments for online participants in this exercise.
- ❖ This workshop was preferable to the first workshop because there were no smaller group breakout sessions, participants preferred to stay in the larger group.
- ❖ A question regarding how these Public Planning Workshops are advertised was raised – The National Park Service uses press releases, an e-Newsletter which is distributed to over 7,000

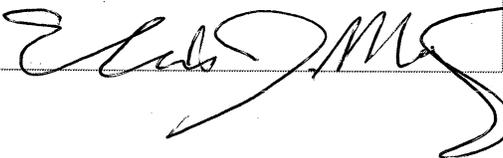
recipients, the web site, the Daily Report, community updates, announcements at organizational meetings. We are always looking for additional avenues to get the word out about public participation opportunities. Please let the park service know if you have ideas.

- ❖ A fear was raised that certain stakeholder groups, such as horseback riders/stock users, are not represented at the workshop today and that they may not even know this workshop is happening. Loader special interest groups could be affecting their recreation.

The wrap up concluded with a reminder that these workshops are not designed for special interest groups and that the group today is being held accountable to taking into consideration, and even identifying opinions that are out there.

A review of the workshop's objectives received concurrence from the group that the objective had been achieved. Please contact Elexis Mayer by phone: 209/379-1377 or email: elexis_mayer@nps.gov should you have any follow-up questions or observations.

Participants were thanked for their time and the workshop was adjourned.

Approval	
Signature: 	Date: 3/31/08