L11 9/24 Sc

[redacted]
09/11/2007 05:23 PM EST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Comments on Tuolumne Planning Workbook

To: yose_planning@nps.gov

This e-mail contains comments on the Tuolumne Planning Workbook. Please modify the Draft Management Prescriptions to eliminate ALL commercial stock packing and horseback riding in the Tuolumne Meadows, Tuolumne River corridor, and surrounding areas. Commercial stock packing and horseback riding in these fragile, high-elevation areas serves only a small minority of visitors while causing significant reduction in water quality, causing harm to trails, and reducing the pleasant experience of other users including day hikers and backpackers.

Please consider an alternative plan for Tuolumne Meadows/River to remove the "High Sierra Camps" at Glen Aulin, Tuolumne Meadows, and Vogelsang. These old and ugly facilities are polluting the surrounding areas with raw sewage, grey water from showers, and grease and detergent wastes from kitchens. The large numbers of stock animals needed to supply the camps with food, water, laundry, and other supplies are also polluting water, eroding trails, and having an adverse affect on the recreation experience of park visitors due to dust, flies and powdered manure. Most of the stock animal use in Yosemite NP is used to service the High Sierra Camps. If the High Sierra Camps are eliminated, most of the damage caused by stock would end. The NPS must address the harm caused by these facilities now, in this plan. The NPS cannot properly put off evaluation and consideration of these impacts to some future wilderness planning process. The NPS proposal is off base if these concerns are not addressed in this plan.

I am very concerned about the water pollution, resource impacts, and harm to recreation that is caused by commercial packstock and horseback riding in the Tuolumne Meadows, the river corridor, and surrounding areas. My recreation experience while backpacking in these ares was severely impacted in a negative way by the forced breathing of old horse manure dust on the dry trails, the many flies attracted to the fresh horse manure and the trail erosion caused by the heavy horse traffic.

David M. Edlund
[redacted]
New Brighton MN 55112
[redacted]

This message was sent using IMP, the Internet Messaging Program.

L11 9/24 Sc

[redacted]
09/11/2007 05:23 PM EST

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David M. Edlund
[redacted]
New Brighton MN 55112
[redacted]

This message was sent using IMP, the Internet Messaging Program.

L12 Sc 9.24

[redacted]
09/10/2007 08:14 PM EDT

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: (no subject)

Yosemite Planning,

I have been a visitor to the Meadows for at least40 summers and am quite concerned about the planning decisions that will be made. In a time of declining park usage it seems absurd to seriously consider measures that will discourage the public from exploring and learning to love and protect this priceless wonder.

Throughout most of my life I have seen subtle declines in services and in the quality of patrons at the campgrounds. Admittedly, this area is not the classic"recreation" area. It has always appealed to the true nature lover who is willing to endure cold nights and minimal comforts and limited commercial services Large RVs have encouraged another type of user to enter the area and they also have a right to enjoy it as long as they do not degrade the experience for other campers. Limiting them and isolating them is not a bad idea. However, classic car camping is a wonderful introduction to the wilderness. It is suitable for beginning campers, young families and older campers who might find backpacking too difficult. Good clean and quiet campgrounds combined with a strong naturalist program should be a basic focus of any planning.

In regards to the proposed concepts have the following comments:

Concept 1. I oppose the removal of campground loop "A", camp store, post office and what remains of the gas station. The campgrounds need to be kept open and well maintained and if necessary monitored more routinely. Removal of the store and gasoline will merely mean more traveling by car to get necessities.

Concept 2. For the average visitor, The Meadows offers the only opportunity to learn about this rare ecosystem. If anything, facilities to accommodate a greater number of visitors should be planned

Concept 3. I generally favor this alternative, but nothing stays the same and I have witnessed a general deterioration in the facilities. Many restrooms need to be replaced or at least carefully maintained Also dishwashing stations need to be added as many people cannot read or disregard the signs Some campers do not have adequate personal cleaning facilities and they will use the restrooms instead Some better cleaning facilities might even result in cleaner campsites. Better monitoring is probably necessary with today's careless people. How else are they to learn what a sound curfew means?

Concept 4. This sounds like a open season on campgrounds.

The most important elements should aimed at providing opportunities for visitors of varying ages and abilities. Tuolumne Meadows is too isolated to fit the day use model. Why encourage more auto traffic than we already have with the Trans-Sierra highway? Therefore, campgrounds and other reasonably priced accommodations are needed to enhance the visitor experience. Not all visitors want to drive by and admire. Not all visitors want to stay in the tent cabins where they cannot cook. Not all visitors want to backpack. Many visitors are not capable of backpacking although they can day hike and enjoy the programs and scenery.

Carol Rominger

See what's new at AOL.com and Make AOL Your Homepage.

L13 SC 9/24

"Rick Sanger"
[redacted]
09/10/2007 09:39 PM
CST
Please respond to Rick

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Planning Workbook

To Whom it may concern:
I wish to comment on the Tuolumne Planning Workbook. It has been brought to my attention that the Draft Management Prescriptions would allow commercial stock packing and horseback riding in **ALL** areas of Tuolumne Meadows and the Tuolumne River corridor. I have long been under the impression that studies have shown stock create a greatly unbalanced amount of water pollution and environmental degradation for the number of park visitors they serve My own hiking experience certainly supports these studies. I have spent the past 11 summers in the high sierra backcountry and have not only seen the degradation of fragile, alpine meadows but also their slow(and never completely reversible) regeneration from eliminating stock use.

It is very clear to me that any responsible plan should limit or eliminate stock use in fragile, alpine meadows. The mandate of the park service is to protect these areas for the enjoyment of future generations. While stock makes these areas accessible to some visitors, it is only a small number who benefit and it is not worth the damage these critters cause While there are lower elevation, more durable areas which better support stock travel, it does not make sense to sacrifice these delicate ecosystems to everyone's detriment.

I also believe alternatives to reduce or eliminate stock used to support the high sierra camps should be considered. Stock used to support these developments creates the vast majority of the damage caused by stock use in the park. This may mean curtailing or eliminating these camps. Of course, eliminating these camps also reduces the amount of chemical impact park concessions have in Yosemite.

Just because something has existed for the past 50 or 100 years, doesn't mean it is a good thing, or that it serves the public interest. The elimination of the giant forest village in Sequoia National Park was a long, difficult road but has created a pristine area for visitor enjoyment of a precious national resource, and serves to better protect this resource. In the same way, it is your obligation to consider alternatives that best protect the resource.

-Rick Sanger

L14 (2)

FAX COVER

September 14, 2007

To: Yosemite Planning

Fax: [redacted]

From: JoAnne Clarke (Armstrong)

Phone: [redacted]
E-Mail:

In Re: Tuolumne River Planning Comments

Pages: 4, including cover

LH 1/24 SC

JoAnne Clarke (Armstrong)
[redacted]
Merced, CA 95340
[redacted]

September 13, 2007

Yosemite Planning
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Fax: 209/379-1294
E-Mail: yose_planning@nps.gov

To Whom It May Concern:
Re: Tuolumne River Planning

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to offer my comments regarding the Tuolumne River Planning process. First I would like to address the draft management prescriptions that have been provided in the planning workbook. This workbook has made a difficult process a little easier to understand and by providing the planning prescriptions you have given me a better idea of the options available.

The Remote Wilderness
This is the very best prescription for this fragile environment. User capacity should be addressed and a reservation system may be necessary to prevent degradation of the area from overuse. The operation of the High Sierra Camps, including the use of pack stock, serves to further impact this area. I support the "grandfathering in of existing camps but encourage restriction of any further developments of this nature. Backpacking and the use of primitive camps, providing that "leave no trace" is mandated, should be emphasized. Sanitation is an issue that can be addressed by providing "pack out" toilet accessories, similar to what is used on Mt. Whitney. This prescription provides for the ultimate "Muir High Country Experience", which is what makes this place so special.

Day-Use Wilderness
I also approve of this prescription. Small parking lots inconspicuously placed can relieve the congestion of road-side parking. I adamantly oppose the use of any type of asphalt/petroleum based surface for parking or trails. As the asphalt breaks down the surface becomes dangerously uneven and the pollutants from these materials invade the environment and flow into the soils and waterways. There are many aggregate surfaces available for this type of use that do not breakdown the way asphalt does. A short hike on the "Muir Trail" where asphalt has been used in the past will convince you of my concerns. The Tuolumne River Plan can be a "new innovator" by installing these types of surfaces where necessary. A small composting toilet and several bear boxes should be

L 14 So 9/24

included in these small parking areas to provide necessary services for the day-use visitor.

High Country Experience
This prescription is acceptable, providing the level of development is limited to rustic campgrounds and campfire interpretive programs given by naturalists, rangers or local Native Americans. Leave the cultural demonstrations in Yosemite Valley. Signage should be limited to trail identification and not interpretive. I don't think the "John Muir Experience" included guided, interpretive walks. These should be left in the Valley as well. Rustic campgrounds should be served with composting toilets, bear boxes and little more.

High Country Base Camp
This prescription should be applied only to those areas where development already exists and any additional development of this type should be discouraged or prohibited. Motor and bicycle touring should be limited to paved areas that already exist. A bicycle lane on the shoulder of Tioga Road would be encouraged while roadside parking is eliminated and replaced by small inconspicuous lots located near trail heads for backpacking and day hike use. We must retain the natural character of this area and in no way do I envision a "Yosemite Valley Experience" here. Large group parties can have a devastating impact on this fragile place. The quiet and serenity should not be sacrificed for motor touring. Stock packing has a severe impact on high country trails and should be limited by a reservation system if necessary.

Historic Tuolumne
This prescription really scares me. It is vague in its intention. I envision "Old Town Tuolumne" with all of the shopping and amenities that that would entail. Perhaps a re-creation of these historic aspects in Lee Vining or El Portal would be more appropriate. Please eliminate this prescription from the Tuolumne River Plan.

Next I will comment on the four Preliminary Alternative Concepts you have provided:

Concept One
This concept is probably the most acceptable to me. The area indicated "High Country Base Camp" covers the area that is already developed here. Existing structures should be retained but any additional structures should be temporary in nature. The store and gas station are necessary to service those traveling over the Pass and should be retained as a seasonal service when the Pass is open. It would be my preference to have this area designated "High Country Experience". Small areas within this section could be designated "Base Camp" such as the existing visitor center, wilderness center and the Tuolumne Meadows Campground while limiting any further development in the Soda Springs and Parsons Lodge area. I appreciate the goals of this concept to remove utilities and roads accessing these structures. If removing the Glen Aulin High Sierra Camp would insure wilderness designation for this area, then I encourage its removal. This concept provides for the least development and impact to the area, which I support.

Concept Two

I think the area indicated "High Country Experience" should be replaced with "Day Use Wilderness. This concept allows for excessive development that is vaguely identified. I think use of the High Sierra Camps should be limited not expanded. These camps cater to a more elite visitor which creates social equity issues. They impact water quality and contribute to the cost of trail maintenance from stock use. If their existence threatens the potential for wilderness designation, then they should be removed. The suggestion of hardened trails again brings visions of asphalt pavement, alternatives to asphalt must be considered. I think wheel chair and bicycle trails are better left in the Valley. Campgrounds and picnic areas should be primitive. Ultra camping and lodging is provided in Yosemite Valley and the wilderness aspect of this area should be retained. Interpretive and cultural programs should be provided in existing facilities or, better yet, in a campfire setting.

Concept Three

I strongly oppose this concept because the "Historic Tuolumne" prescription covers the entire non-wilderness area. It vaguely suggests extensive development of campgrounds, lodging and food service and threatens the natural, wilderness character of this place. The history of Tuolumne Meadows can be re-created outside of this area of limited space.

Concept Four

I agree that concept four provides for less impact than concepts two and three and appreciate the fact that fewer opportunities for universal access exist. This is a special place and part of the attraction is the difficulty of access. It appeals to the wild spirit within us and challenges our abilities. It is the effort that provides the value and appreciation. The absence of hardened trails, picnic areas and interpretive facilities is a good thing. John Muir didn't have picnic tables or cultural demonstrations during his travels through the Sierras. Please make every effort to retain the natural, wilderness character that has made this place so special. Limit user capacity to insure its survival. The harder something is to attain, the more value we place on it. Establish a reservation system if necessary. Limit access to foot travel but provide for bicycles along the Tioga Road. Utilize satellite parking outside of the park and encourage trans-Sierra hikes by providing a shuttle service. Protect the meadows and scenic vistas by eliminating the volunteer saplings that encroach on the perimeter of the meadows.

Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of the long-term planning for this precious place.

Sincerely,
JoAnne Clarke (Armstrong)

L15
9/24

"Stephen E. Rock"
[redacted]

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Planning Workbook

09/14/2007 12:06 PM
MST

Dear Folks,
Here are my comments about the Tuolumne Planning Workbook.

I go to the Tuolumne area often. Most recently this summer to Waterwheel falls and from Dana Meadows over Parker Pass.

First, thank you for taking care of our wilderness. My grandchildren are 7 and 10 years old are being taken to the wilderness by their parents and I hope that it is still there for generatins to come.

The most important negative thing for me is the problem of horses trashing the trails and polluting the water. The number of horses in the area should be drastically reduced.

My observation is that this could be easily accomplished by eliminating 'LUXURY' trips. Most encounters I have with stock and horses involve very few 'guests' accompanied by many servents and horses carying tables, chairs, beds, ice chests with steaks etc. (I met a guide a few weeks ago who described his very heavy and volumonous 'bedroll'. There was no problem since the horses could carry it.) This puts a great strain on the wilderness so that a very few rich individuals can experience the wilderness as if they were in their mansions back home.
If people would like to ride, let them take minimal equipment like a backpacker does.

The same goes for the High Sierra Camps. From what I have been told, they have fancy food, showers and maids to make the beds. Bring them down to the basics and then there
will be less need for staff and fewer horse trips to bring in supplies. The wilderness is for wilderness experience and should not be damaged so some people can be supplied with luxurious living.

The Vogelsang HS camp looks like a slum situated in a very beautiful area and should be cleaned up or eliminated.

Stephen Rock
[redacted]
Palo Alto, CA
94303

[redacted]

L16 SC 9/24

Jeffrey Kane
[redacted]

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Comments on the Tuolumne Planning Workbook

09/13/2007 11:08 PM
MST

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to submit the following comments on the Tuolumne Planning Workbook. I am an avid backpacker and mountaineer, and have spent several weeks each of the past several summers in the backcountry throughout the Sierra Nevada. I have also worked as a stream ecologist performing water quality evaluations throughout the Sierra Nevada for the past six years.

I am glad that the NPS is finally developing a management plan for the Tuolumne River. The planning area is truly one of the mountain wilderness gems of our nation, and as such is in danger of being loved to death if the NPS does not proactively restrict activities in the basin. Of fundamental concern to me is the role of ***commercial enterprises*** in National Parks and designated wilderness areas. Such for-profit operations that necessarily rely on economic growth for their well-being are inherently antithetical to preserving and conserving our finite parks and wildernesses. As such, I believe it is NPS' duty to limit such operations only to the extent truly necessary, and that a good first step would be to allocate use to those types that minimize resource impacts so that these areas may be enjoyed by the maximum amount of people without compromising their integrity.

With this in mind, I was appalled to read two references to the High Sierra Camps as "Outstanding Remarkable Values":

> "Historic landscape features and structures associated with the High Sierra Camp Loop represent the development of a nationally distinctive kind of high-country touring." (page 3)
>
> "The rustic high-country lodging available along the Dana Fork, in Tuolumne Meadows, and above the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne offers a distinctive type of recreation that is unique in the national park system." (page 5)

This is an outrage. In fact, nothing about these "camps" has any place in a wild and scenic river basin. My first encounter with one of these camps (at Vogelsang) came as I backpacked from Reds Meadow to Tuolumne. After five day of blissful solitude, I was unexpectedly shocked back to the trappings of humans in an area of otherwise unique solitude. Before I even saw these "historic [] structures" I was greeted by the smell of festering sewage, manure, and garbage. I do not understand how the NPS can continue to rationalize such operations in a wilderness setting. The park already offers many outstanding recreation opportunities, and should not feel obliged to pander to visitors that wish for luxury and convenience - this can be had anywhere outside the park. Nowhere in the draft planning documents does the NPS adequately disclose the resource and social impacts from these commercial operations, nor justify their continued existence and operation. The final EIS must do so, and consider management alternatives that include their

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SC

removal.

In my travels throughout the Sierra backcountry, I have observed that the most substantial impacts to water quality, campsites, and soil are due to packstock use. I have also read recent scientific literature showing that packstock manure has polluted several streams and lakes in the Sierra (Derlet, R. W., and J.R. Carlson. 2006. "Coliform Bacteria in Sierra Nevada Wilderness Lakes and Streams: What Is the Impact of Backpackers, Pack Animals, and Cattle?" Wilderness and Environmental Medicine 17: 15-20). As such, and given the extreme demands for use of the Tuolumne River area (speaking to the need for NPS to ration use as efficiently as possible), the NSP should consider alternatives that strictly limit or eliminate all stock use in the Tuolumne River basin, especially commercial stock use.

Above all, in this planning process the NPS should prioritize opportunities for solitude and the preservation of all of the Tuolumne River basin's unique natural features and resource for future generations.

Thank you in advance for considering my comments.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey Kane
[redacted]
Eugene, OR 97405
[redacted]

L/7 SC
9/24

"Kurt Steinbacher"
[redacted]
09/13/2007 05:46 PM
EST

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Public Comments, Tuolumne Planning Workbook

Hello,

I am commenting on the Tuolumne Planning Workbook.

I would object to the Outstandingly Remarkable Values "***Historic landscape features and structures associated with the High Sierra Camp Loop represent the development of a nationally distinctive kind of high-country touring***" and ***"The rustic high-country lodging available along the Dana Fork, in Tuolumne Meadows, and above the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne offers a distinctive type of recreation that is unique in the national park system "*** being included in the workbook.

Both statements are inaccurate descriptions of structures and activities that are inconsistent with and inappropriate in, Wilderness. The fact that you have allowed these activities and structures to exist in what otherwise would be pristine backcountry in no way justifies their becoming part of the workbook, or any resulting management plan. I'd prefer that you just admit that you have been boneheads about this, and that you promise to be better stewards of the backcountry from now on.

Thank you,

Kurt Steinbacher
[redacted]
Evansville, IN

L18 SE 9/24

"Robert Wood" [redacted]
09/13/2007 02:50 PM
MST

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc: [redacted]
Subject: Tuolumne Meadows planning testimony

To Yosemite NPS: These are submitted Comments on the TUOLUMNE PLANNING WORKBOOK from Robert S & Deanne R. Wood, sent by e-mail on 9/13/07. Please make them part of the official record.

The Planning Workbook is vague, repetitive, boring and poorly written in impenetrable governmentese, a waste of taxpayer money. After reading it we have no idea what's being considered. It's almost impossible to distinguish between the four plans

In summary: WE URGE MINIMAL DEVELOPMENT OF TUOLUMNE, SO I GUESS WE FAVOR CONCEPT ONE

We will gladly sacrifice comfort for a more natural, wilder-looking environment. Let's not repeat the deplorable over-development of Yosemite Valley.

We want No hotels or tourist housing of any kind beyond that already provided by Yosemite Lodge and the campground, with no additional paving.

We want NO more visitor facilities, like musems, information centers, stock trails, trail signs, pre-digested "interpretive" signs, parking lots, fast food sellers or restuarants.

We have been using the backcountry camps for 50 years, and we urge the NPS to keep them intact. Why aren't they specifically considered in the workbook?

We were at Vogelsang during the July '07 search for the old lady, and the camp was badly abused by the arrogant Search & Rsecue horde, headed by an officious, armed fool from the Rockies who didn't know the area he was supposed to search!

Submitted by Robert S. Wood and Deanne R. Wood

Robert S. Wood
[redacted]
Sedona, AZ 86351

L19 SC 9/24

Jay McKnight
[redacted]
09/12/2007 11:22 PM
MST
Please respond to Jay McKnight

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Comments on "Tuolumne Planning Workbook"

Hello yose_planning,

Goodness, what a lot of bureaucratic talk in the "Tuolumne Planning Workbook" -- "how can we please all of those people who have opposing goals". So here are my comments, and how you could please me.

I have hiked, backpacked, and driven a car in Yosemite, Kings Canyon, Sequoia, and the San Joaquin drainage between since 1940. I have backpacked the Tuolumne Canyon, and to all of the High Sierra Camps, tho I've never stayed at one. I still hike and drive.

What activities are unique to the High Sierra? Enjoying the beauty of the mountains, rocks, trees, and rivers. How is that best done? Hiking, backpacking, camping, and even driving a car!

What is the cause of the harm to the Sierra? TOO MANY VISITORS. Why too many visitors? Partly, at least, too many facilities to attract more visitors. Why too many facilities? Because they make money for the provider. But are they good for the natural beauty of the Sierra? NO!

Which facilities should be removed? The ones that cause the most destruction and pollution of the Sierra. As a hiker, I find that horses and mules on the trails destroy the trails -- they pound them to sand, which increases erosion and makes walking difficult. They destroy the meadows. They defecate and urinate on the trails, making a big stink, attracting flies, polluting the streams, and making walking unpleasant.

And why so many horses? Because they are a life style for the packers, and they make money for the pack station owners. Should the park service care about the packers? I guess so, but they attract more visitors with the horses & mules, and this is undesirable. Furthermore, the destruction of the trails should be your first consideration -- the welfare of the packers is not (or should not) be one of your primary considerations.

Who uses the packers? A good deal of the usage is for the High Sierra Camps -- another attraction to visitors that also pollutes the mountains and streams, makes money for their operators, and should be removed.

By the way, it is ironic that the other managers of Sierra lands, the Forest Service and the BLM, are pushing hard to close 4WD roads on their lands, and cars do not even inherently pollute the roads and streams!

--
Best regards,
Jay McKnight

Cupertino, CA US
mailto[redacted]
Tel: +[redacted]

L 20

Se 9/24

[redacted]
09/13/2007 01:40 PM MST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc:
Subject: Tuolumne Planning Workbook

I'm unclear about what exactly the 4 concepts are to comment on. The workbook seemed to have a lot of useless information and did not get to the point.

In general, I think preserving the natural environment should be the number one priority. Then we should think about how humans can enjoy it in the most ecologically sensitive way. Instead of building new outhouses, how about composting toilets? Instead of more parking, how about more bike paths and bike locking places at every parking lot? Instead of building more structures, how about tearing down the ones that are obsolete or not necessary? Let's make Yosemite a model of how environmental a national park can be! We could model it off of Denali National Park, where wildlife and natural environment come first, humans come second. We are the visitors and we need to give it the respect it deserves.

-R. Martin