

Comment Letters Received during the 60-day Public Review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias

Correspondence ID:	1	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,26,2013 14:26:08				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I am strongly in favor of your proposal to restore the Mariposa Grove by creating a new hub at the South Entrance Station, removing the parking lot and facilities at the lower Grove, ceasing the tram service, and turning the road from the lower Grove to the upper Grove into a hiking trail. I once hiked this road during the winter season when it was closed to all vehicles and it was a wonderful experience to have a quiet hike through all the giant Sequoias. Your proposal not only improves ecological conditions for the Sequoia trees, but also improves the opportunities for visitors to really connect with nature.				
Correspondence ID:	2	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,26,2013 15:55:47				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I fully support a plan to remove the parking lot and tram service within mariposa grove. I like the idea of using the south entrance as a transit point for a future lot into the grove.				
Correspondence ID:	3	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,26,2013 19:32:46				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	The tram ride through the Mariposa Grove helped explain the Mariposa Grove to me in a way that otherwise, I would not have truly appreciated the Grove as much as I do now.				
	If at all possible, please keep the tram.				
	For those of us who are older, and can't hike as much as we used to -- the tram is wonderful -- and for disabled people, the tram is probably the only way for them to enjoy the majesty and splendor of the Grove.				
	Again -- please keep the tram				
Correspondence ID:	4	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,26,2013 19:45:34				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	My sisters and I have been doing volunteer work weeks in Yosemite for a few years now. We are not retired nor are we financially able to give to the fund but we are able to give of our time our hard work and our enthusiams. This is why I am pleased to see this project going forward. Our group had discussed this type of restoration project last year while working in the Toulumne Groves. This will help restore the groves while stopping any further deterioration and it still allows a wonderful experience for every the visitor to the park. When the time comes count me in to help in any way I can.				
Correspondence ID:	5	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 08:23:04				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I wholeheartedly support The Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, especially the removal of 115 parking spaces that now sit in the middle of the grove. The restoration of wetlands and hydrology and soils within the grove so that the trees can regenerate is a long-overdue project. Opening up more giant sequoia habitat and providing trails for people to walk on so they are not damaging the roots of the trees is a practice that will enable future growth of these magnificent trees as well as enabling future visitors to enjoy their beauty as well. I used to live in California and was a regular visitor until approximately 1990 at which time the smog and congestion and litter rendered this awesome park as too disappointing to continue visiting. Sadly, Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks have also suffered the same fate. I compliment and fully support the National Park Service for its bold plan for restoring health and beauty to this one-of-a-kind place on Earth.				
Correspondence ID:	6	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 08:54:06				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I support the restoration plan as proposed.				
Correspondence ID:	7	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 10:29:49				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	THANKS TO NPS FOR EFFORTS TO PRESERVE MARIPOSA GROVE. HURRAY FOR YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK!				

HAS ANYONE EVER CONSIDER SETTING UP A HIGH LINE (NOT A ZIP LINE) IN A BIG TREE GROVE SO THAT VISITORS CAN SAFELY EXPERIENCE THE TREES AT THE TOP OF THE CANOPY? DO YOU KNOW OF ANYTHING LIKE THIS FOR EITHER S. GIGANTEA OR SEMPIVIRENS? JUST CURIOUS.

I THINK SIMILAR WORK WAS DONE IN SEQUOIA AND/OR KINGS CANYON NAT PARK OVER PAST 10 TO 20 YEARS, AND IT LOOKS A LOT BETTER THAN IT USED TO (NO CANOPY ACCESS). I GUESS YOU PROBABLY ALREADY KNOW THAT.

LAST YEAR I VISITED GLACIER NAT PARK - BY OVERNIGHT TRAIN FROM PORTLAND - AND IT WAS GREAT. TWO NIGHTS AT SPERRY HIGH CAMP, WHERE THE ANCIENT ROCKS ARE GREEN AND PURPLE (RED). I REALLY LIKE THE MOUNTAIN GOATS. I WILL BE GOING BACK THERE FOR SURE.

NEXT: (1) CRATER LAKE; (2) N RIM + UTAH PARKS; (3) DENALI & KENAI FJORDS.

HURRAY FOR THE NATIONAL PARKS!

Correspondence ID: 8 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 10:49:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: How wonderful to find good news in the Chronicle!

I absolutely support all measures to reduce the human toll on our forests and wildlife. I am especially grateful for every public description of the shallow root-system of the redwoods; many people would care if they were better informed.

Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 9 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 12:03:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I urge you to do all that you can to perserve our trees and the overall park. I fully support limiting cars, the number of visitors, and other suggestions in the document. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 10 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 12:22:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Bravo! As a young child in the early 1950s, I remember my parents driving our old car to see these magnificent trees. When we saw the Tunnel Tree, my Dad said it was a great shame to dishonor this ancient giant.

We never returned to the site.

Today I read in the SF Chronicle that steps are being taken to restore the area to its original pristine beauty. This is the best news! It means that these beautiful trees will remain for future generations of people to enjoy.

We need to respect and protect these trees and the habitat in which they grow. If we let them die, we cannot replace them.

When the project is finished, I will return and show the trees to my grandchildren. It's exciting to realize that they will be able to show them to their own grandchildren!

Thank you!

PS: How do I make a donation for this specific project?

Correspondence ID: 11 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 12:50:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Wonderful news! It's about time that we protect "an icon of the Park Service", but, as I believe, this grove is an icon for Planet Earth.

My wife and I own a house in Arnold, CA, near Big Trees State Park. Every time we go there and take the boardwalk through a similar grove of Sequoias, I am proud of what the State of California has done there. I am also greatly dismayed by what the earlier members of the human race did; cutting down the tree for the "Dance Floor" and removing the bark from another giant

Sequoia so it could be exhibited at various venues.

I'm glad that the NPS is beginning to wake up and treat these giants well.

Needless to say, I'm in favor of Option 4, the "preferred alternative".

Good Work

Correspondence ID: 12 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 12:52:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Great Idea! These trees need to protected from our "loving them to death". Bravo! It sounds great.

Correspondence ID: 13 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 13:29:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I'd like to express my support for an alternative that brings the Mariposa Grove and environs to its most natural state.This appears to be Alternative 2 to my untrained eye. Thank you,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 14 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 14:02:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I fully support removal of the parking lot and visitor center. Anything that we can do to remove human impact on the grove is a good thing.

We do not need trams or tour buses. The elderly or didabled get along on wheelchairs at muir woods just fine, and this situation should be the same.

Correspondence ID: 15 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 14:18:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I support Alternative 2.

Correspondence ID: 16 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 15:24:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I hope this project to restore the Mariposa Grove will go forward. My family and I are enthralled by the Giant Sequoias and Redwoods in California and often travel to be in their presence. Anything that can be done to improve their habitat is more important than ever because of climate change. More and more people are appreciative of these giant trees and want to see them survive. Any way you can improve the viewing of these trees with the least impact is a benefit to our society and future generations. It is our duty to be good stewards of these trees after destroying so many. I'm happy to see taxes going to improve our natural environment!

Correspondence ID: 17 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 18:07:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: In general I support the plan to move parking and unnecessary foot traffic further from the grove. I want to comment on the aspect of the plan that eliminates tram service.B

I hope you can find a sequoia-safe way to maintain a tram service for the tree tour, or something like it. I understand the weight and vibration are the problems you're trying to mitigate. Can a compromise be made, or an alternative found?B

- Reduced tram service? - motorized wheelchairs/scooter rental? - What about an aerial tram? (a gondola system, like at amusement parks, but you could run them lower to the ground for good views, and you could pipe in a recorded narration)

There are a lot of people who would miss out on this beautiful natural wonder because they cannot hike the long loop if you eliminate tram service completely. Yosemite is a unique place in the world that offers nature lovers of all abilities the opportunity to see a large number of natural attractions with unusually easy access, of which the Mariposa Grove, via the tram tour, is a good example.B

I understand the need to preserve these trees for future generations and I am in favor of measures that reduce private car use and such in the park. But please remember to take visitors of all abilities into consideration in the Mariposa plan.B

Thank you.

Correspondence ID:	18	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 20:23:35				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	The Mariposa Grove is one of the treasures of the National Park System. I support these recommendations to protect the trees for future generations and remove congestion from the Grove.				
Correspondence ID:	19	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 20:30:14				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Great idea to restrict traffic in the Grove of Giant Sequoias to maintain the pristine quality of the surroundings and keep the environment clean and natural. Yosemite is one of the most special places on earth and should be protected for wildlife and future generations. [REDACTED]				
Correspondence ID:	20	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 20:59:39				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I appreciate trying to persevere the park environment, but I think something should be kept to enable elderly and disabled visitors ability to easily experience the trees. Possibly limit trams per day, giving preference to elderly and disabled, because of there limited ability to experience the full experience. Thank you for considering our input.				
Correspondence ID:	21	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 21:42:11				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I would like to comment on an article that I read today in the San Francisco Chronicle regarding proposed changes in the park.				
	I am all for eliminating the gift shop and parking lot. I would like to see the habitat restored.				
	The tram or something like it should stay. I visited the park with my elderly parents a couple of years ago.				
	We enjoyed a wonderful tour of the giant sequoias that would not have been possible with out the tram. The elderly and disabled need to be able to have access to the park.				
	Sincerely, [REDACTED]				
Correspondence ID:	22	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,28,2013 00:53:20				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	As far as the noisy trams are concerned, it would be a huge improvement to use a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicle or tram. It is clean and non-polluting and is very quiet. CNG technology has come a long way in recent years and should be readily available as a diesel alternative.				
Correspondence ID:	23	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,28,2013 06:54:00				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I WORKED IN YOS. FOR 9 YEARS. YOU SYSTMATICALLY CLOSED CAMP GROUNDS AND RESTRICTED ACESS TO MANY VENUES. NOW THE BIG ONE THAT EVERY TAX PAYER WANTS TO SEE.MAKE IT HARDER FOR THEM TO GET TO THE ATTRACTION, THEN CLOSE IT. GOOD THINKING. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE TAX PAYERS PAY THE ENTRANCE FEE FOR? OH WELL, THE NEXT THING DOWN THE ROAD WILL BE CLOSE THE WHOLE PARK SO THE RANGERS AND ADM. CAN HAVE IT ALL TO THEMSELVES. GOOD THINKING, KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK.				
Correspondence ID:	24	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,28,2013 07:32:10				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	My only concern would be for people with certain disabilities. Removal of a tram would severely limit access to areas for people not capable of "making the hike" to view the trees. Removal of the parking lot and use of a shuttle works for me. The gift shop can be relocated to the parking area near the south entrance although thought might be given to a small booth at the Grove for bottled water, sports drinks etc. for the benifit of the visitors. Not everyone will think to bring fluids with them to ward off dehydration.				

It is a beautiful place and deserves to be preserved but it should not be restricted to just the "hale and hearty".

My 2 cents.

Correspondence ID: 25 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,28,2013 09:15:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: PLEASE protect the trees! There are plenty of other wonders for the public to view in Yosemite. These precious trees are certainly big enough that they can be viewed and appreciated from a distance.

I urge you to go forward with the plan as soon as possible before any more damage is done.

This is the right action to take and it has already been delayed too long.

Thank you from the trees!

Correspondence ID: 26 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,28,2013 11:22:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Removing Asphalt from Parking Lots is a "Good" move. Removing all other Asphalt will improve Tree Health. Re-Route Trails away from Root Structure will improve Tree Health. New Transportation Center will help reduce congestion in Grove Area. Provide Shuttle/Tram Service to Grove will improve "Forest Health". Doing all of these items very soon,will Protect the Grove for Future Generations

Correspondence ID: 27 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I just returned from snow camping near Glacier Point two days ago with my eldest son. I told him about seeing the firefall and visiting the Hotel on the point when I was a child. He was shocked to imagine both and commented; "How could those things have been allowed here?". I expressed that it was a different time when the best interests of the land were trumped by ease of use and eventually they were eliminated. I could not of been happier to read of the proposed changes this morning with respect to the Mariposa Grove. I can't wait to tell him the news. GREAT PLAN!!! Thanks.

Correspondence ID: 28 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,28,2013 14:10:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: In the name of heaven , when will the Government stop trying to deny the average person access to some of the beauty of Yosemite. To expect older people to walk around Big Tree's and enjoy the majesty of these "Giants of nature is absurd. Do you expect disabled and handicapped people to stroll around this area? The present tram excursion does no harm to any of the tree's and is the only way to experience this grove without very difficult circumstances. The small gift shop at Big Tree's fulfills a needed service for folks needing some refreshments of water or a small snack as they enjoy this area. How many people are the environmentalists going to put out of work with their insane idea's of preservation. Yosemite compared to the time in the early 1920s is by far a better run place environmental wise. I have seen pictures of rangers feeding bears from the back of a truck, camp sites littering the meadows with no toilet facilities, no controls of any kind on keeping Yosemite "Pure " Please stop this nonsense and make Yosemite a place of beauty that people can enjoy without silly restrictions that have no impact on saving or preserving anything [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 29 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,28,2013 16:29:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am completely in favor of the plans to restore the Mariposa Grove to its natural state.

Correspondence ID: 30 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,28,2013 16:48:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

I want to praise the leadership and vision it has taken to move forward with protections for the Sequoias. I have reviewed some of the proposal information.

I want to strongly support and encourage for the removal of the parking lot from the grove, creation of elevated paths, and for there to be shuttles provided to bring people to the grove from a newly built parking lot.

Unfortunately, there are so many people (too many) visiting Yosemite during the summer we do need to create more protection

for the environment and Mariposa Grove.

Thank you [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID:	31	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Mar,02,2013 20:19:14				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I have some serious concerns about removing the tram from the Mariposa Grove at Yosemite Park. My family and I have brought visitors here from Japan and Australia, who were older travelers and could never hike the almost vertical paths to the top of the grove. I have bad knees myself and young grandchildren and will be unable to revisit the grove if the tram is removed. People with babies and toddlers will also be excluded as will anyone with serious disabilities. There needs to be a better balance between the conservation aspects and the access aspects of the park. The tram never felt like a noisy intrusion and the information given by the guides helped with our understanding and interpretation of the wonderful trees. Moving the parking lot back from the trees and even removal of the gift shop are reasonable but the tram is really needed for the very young, very old, and disabled. Thank you for the chance to comment. I'd hate to think that in the future the only way we'll be able to see our National Parks is by a flyover.				
Correspondence ID:	32	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Mar,03,2013 15:12:34				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	This is in reference to Appendix C of the "Draft Environmental Impact Statement", page C-24 & C-25 reference "Utilities". The plan of action calls for slip lining the entire length of the water supply line, a 4 inch Cast Iron pipe, with 2" HDPE (plastic pipe). The concern with the 2 inch pipe is it sufficiently sized to carry the amount of flow, volume, necessary to supply the grove and the entrance station? For example: The flow rate of 100ft length of 2 inch pipe is approx. 18 gallons. A 4 inch pipe of 100ft will carry 67 gallons. These rates are approximate and gathered from the Internet. Water usage, length of distribution lines, the affects of gravity, water storage, are other factors that determine pipe sizing.				
Correspondence ID:	33	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	E-mail				
Correspondence:	dear planning commission,				
	i read the article in the san francisco chronicle today and wanted to put my 2-cents in. yes, these trees need a break. get rid of the commercialism and car exhaust and human traffic in these sensitive and sacred groves. this couldn't come a minute too soon.				
	thank you.				
Correspondence ID:	34	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	E-mail				
Correspondence:	I STRONGLY support Alternative 2 of the plan. Why risk further impact to this Gem of the National Park System?, especially when much of cost will be covered by Yosemite Conservancy?				
Correspondence ID:	35	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Mar,05,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	E-mail				
Correspondence:	Have been there several times. Always lovely but please do the proposed work to keep the trees healthy and in a more natural setting. Walking is good.				
Correspondence ID:	36	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Feb,27,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	E-mail				
Correspondence:	I think the new plan is a wonderful step forward! The Giant Sequoias are a marvelous part of Yosemite, but the present situation has made a visit to the big trees so difficult that I have not even tried to visit for many years. I recently traveled to Sequoia National Park to see the trees in that setting, and thought that the park had done a fine job of protecting the trees while making the visitor experience very pleasant. That park doesn't get nearly the traffic that Yosemite does, of course, but it seems like a good model. The trees are so amazing that I look forward to getting back to the Mariposa Grove soon!				
	Thank you.				
Correspondence ID:	37	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Mar,03,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	E-mail				
Correspondence:	I saw the story in the Mariposa Gazette this last week on the Mariposa Grove plan and think this is so wrong to close the upper grove to the tram tours, NPS spend over 3 million dollars on these new ADA trams just a couple years ago and now you want to get rid of them, almost 70,000 park visitors ride these tram a year and many would never see the upper grove without them, the upper grove is ten times better than the lower grove, people with haddicaps, elderly, and familys with small children are never going to be able to hike the 4 miles round trip 1000 feet up into the upper grove.your wanting to make this part of the grove for				

hikers only and this is not a hikers only park, if you want to take out the parking lot , remove the gift shop, move the road away from the base of the trees, O.K. but don't make it so millions of people will never see this speical part of the park, it's wrong, I have drove the tram tour in the grove over many years, and the joy this has given to see this wonder to 1000's of people is just wrong to take away.

Correspondence ID: 38 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Oh please do everything you can to decrease the public amusement park like experience among the magnificent sequoias in California. I have not gone to Yosemite in decades because I feel badly about being there, being another exhaust producing driver and trail tramping walker among the far too many who are enticed to party all seasons in the woods. When did we decide to "use" these places without regard to the impact, as if they were convention halls that should accommodate constant amusement.

Correspondence ID: 39 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Friend, I am writing with sincere gratitude having just read plans to restore health and a more reverential feel for the big trees of Yosemite. I fully support the preferred alternative to remove the parking lot and allow only those with special needs to travel by vehicle to the trees. I hope that can be a dirt road if it is to exist? I just visited the North Grove of Calaveras Big Trees State Park for ceremony and offering to "Grandfather" aka "Discovery" Tree. My experience there was certainly one of the "carnival" feel, especially for this largest and first of the trees to be harmed in that grove. No doubt, I am on the extreme end of those calling for restoration of reverence for big trees. I believe this is essential for the longevity of these groves and has the potential to improve our relationship with forests worldwide. I dream big with an active imagination. Here is my first reflection from our experience in the Calaveras grove. As you will read, this visit had deeply personal relevance for me. I am in the process of creating a memorial to "Grandfather Tree". Re-membering Big Trees Please include me on your mailing list for notices and updates on progress with this plan. I will submit formal comment on the draft EIS as soon as possible. With all gratitude and respect, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] www.extinctionwitness.org

Correspondence ID: 40 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I support: ALTERNATIVE 2: SOUTH ENTRANCE HUB (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE).

These trees are glorious and priceless. NPS should offer maximum protection from human intrusion while allowing people to respectfully visit the grove.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 41 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Mar,05,2013 19:50:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Vehicles should not be allowed within at least a mile of any of the groves. Pathways should all be elevated from the surface and off path hiking should be minimized. There should be no food or drink allowed that cannot be carried out. Sufficient warning at the trailhead about there being no drinking fountains, trash cans, etc and everything that enters the grove must leave the grove.

Correspondence ID: 42 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Feb,27,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Oh please do everything you can to decrease the public amusement park like experience among the magnificent sequoias in California. I have not gone to Yosemite in decades because I feel badly about being there, being another exhaust producing driver and trail tramping walker among the far too many who are enticed to party all seasons in the woods. When did we decide to "use" these places without regard to impact, as if they were convention halls that should accomodate constant amusment.
[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 43 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Mar,06,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: As a tram driver/tour guide in the Mariposa grove I think you're making a very big mistake by removing the tram tours. My passengers are always telling me how great they are, they can see so much more than if they were hiking, PLUS they get to learn about the history of the area. We take almost full loads every trip. What really needs to be done is to repave the tram road. That's what passengers hate about the ride. It's a giant pothole with a few smooth spots thrown in. Don't deprive tourists the chance to see and learn about the most beautiful place in the world. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 44 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Mar,20,2013 10:45:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is with deep dismay I am writing to express my extreme concern for your plans to effectively shut down Mariposa Grove to all but hardy hikers. It is short-sighted and I believe you have not truly considered the long term ramifications.

I have hiked Mariposa Grove several times. Due to my husband's handicap, we have always taken the tram to the upper grove and hiked down from there. Without that tram, he could never have experienced what is by far the most beautiful grove in Mariposa.

I have taken guests to Mariposa, many of them elderly. They could never experience the beauties of that the upper grove as well as all the unique trees along the way without that tram.

Your logic, in my opinion, neglects the fact that for people to support a park, they must be able to see a park. The other sequoia groves all require a hike (I've done them all). Only at Mariposa can non-hikers, disabled people and those with limited mobility experience the true glory of the giant sequoias. You are basically taking that away from them.

Throughout the park, transportation is converting to electronic vehicles, which are much quieter. Why can not the trams to the same? This would still allow people to visit, while drastically reducing noise. Why can the trams not run less frequently? Again, less noise, since that seems to be your primary concern.

One must experience the sequoias to appreciate and support their survival and protection. They are hardy trees, as evidenced by their age. In your over-zealous desire to protect them, you are eliminating the funding source that will maintain them for generations, and punishing those who can not reach them without aid.

I urge you to step back from your perspective as avid outdoor people capable of hiking strenuous trails, and look from the viewpoint of people who love the outdoors but are limited due to age or handicaps, and realize you want to deprive them of enjoying the same things you feel you have a right to enjoy in experiencing nature.

I urge you to come up with a constructive solution that takes all variables into consideration, and does not basically close Mariposa Grove to all but hardy hikers.

This is not the Yosemite Conservancy that I know. For years, I supported the Yosemite Association for their good work. What you are proposing smacks of environmental excess, instead of a balanced approach that is good for the environment and visitors. John Muir, Teddy Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln - they all understood that people needed to enjoy and experience our nation's national wonders in order to be willing to preserve and protect them. Do not lose sight of their vision!

Member of Yosemite Conservancy

Correspondence ID: 45 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Mar,21,2013 09:49:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: At last,an environmentally driven action is planned for Mariposa Grove!! I am 100% in favor of Plan 2. The more human footprint removed in the Grove, the better. In a perfect world, MG would be like Merced and Tuolumne Groves...if you really want to experience these mastodons of the vegetable kingdom, then WALK into their world.

Respectfully submitted,



Correspondence ID: 46 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Mar,21,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Yosemite Nat'l Park officials Dated, March 20, 2013 To whom it may concern; Merced WSRA Plan Comment

As I enter my view for the record and for your consideration, I ask myself, will they really listen? Will they really care? I am fearful that my posterity is being robbed of the historical recreational activities in Yosemite that has been such a huge part of the people's ability to enjoy it. A select few with money and prowess have scared park officials into redefining their own National Park's mission statement. When I hear that your plan is two fold, #1 Being to protect river values and #2 To ensure that you maintain the quality of the visitor experience, what I see respectfully, is a smoke and mirrors campaign. On one hand the recreational activities under consideration for removal are the swimming pools, the bicycle rentals, the horseback day rides in the valley, the elimination of the ice skating rink, the golf course, the river rafting, and the big trees tram ride, all of which have no impact on river values according to your own environmental impact report and studies. Your proposed plan does however negatively impact the visitors' experience. The only happy exception would be of a very few select environmental groups that want to see OUR national park returned to a natural state, reminiscent of a time before mankind had any impact upon it. How are older people from all over the world who come to see OUR park, supposed to be able to see the big trees if they are physically limited and cannot walk up the roadway and trails? Are you planning to allow only handicapped and official vehicle traffic perhaps? That is what you've done to the "lost loop" from Happy Isles to Mirror Lake to the Awahnee Hotel area. That is reverse discrimination, allowing access for only a certain minority of groups and individuals and not others. Many physically

limited individuals only access to parts of the park is on horseback. A day ride trip to Mirror or Merced Lake is the only way they can see, access and enjoy these and other various areas of the park. I am more than upset that your plan intends to deny them enjoyment of their own natural resources, under the guise of protecting their enjoyment of it. Yosemite's for everyone! Footnote 5 ask's that you consider these measures. You have considered that without implementing them, so now please leave our recreational activities alone! In closing remember that your own mission statement is, "The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world." Respectfully submitted,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 47 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Mar,24,2013 21:27:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I concur with the NPS finding of Alternative 2 as preferred.

Correspondence ID: 48 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Mar,28,2013 21:05:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I support Alternative 2 for restoration of the Mariposa Grove. I have visited many of our lovely Redwood forest in California and regularly hike and backpack in Yosemite. Redwood forests offer the opportunity for quiet solitude and beauty found nowhere else in other forests. The increasing numbers of people who visit bring with them increased noise pollution, decreased air quality (pollution from auto exhaust etc). I welcome the changes that alternative 2 would bring to increase protection of the Redwoods. LV

Correspondence ID: 49 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,02,2013 10:02:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As a member of BCHU, I have heard that you propose to eliminate stock-use as you restore this beautiful park. Firstly, Thank You for your services in maintaining this beautiful and historic park. BCHA is a dedicated group of stockmen, ranchers, riders, whose primary purpose is to help YOU maintain OUR Nation's parks for recreation by all...hiker, biker, stock, horsemen. BCHA has given tens of thousands of volunteer hours to make up for OUR budget shortfalls representing tens of millions of dollars so that repairing bridges, paths, rainfall damage to trails, removing downed logs, cleaning up as "No Trace Left Behind" for the enjoyment of those future visitors to OUR parks can and will be done. Won't you please consider speaking to your local chapters of Back Country Horsemen of America to begin to understand why you need us as much as we need you in maintaining OUR beautiful parks, for the enjoyment all!

Correspondence ID: 50 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,02,2013 11:37:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I have also commented on the river plan today. I consider myself somewhat of an environmentalist. My husband has done work for Restore Hetch Hetchy. We donate money to many environmental organizations (Foothill Conservancy, WWF, etc). But I think the park service is going way too far with all these changes they want to make, eliminating activities for visitors. In regards to the Mariposa Grove, PLEASE DON'T ELIMINATE THE TRAM!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I am a senior citizen now and always thought once I'm unable to hike how nice it is that I can still ride the tram to the Upper Grove, which to me is the nicer grove. Now you want to make it accessible only to fit people, which typically are younger people. The tram is a wonderful educational tool too, for visitors and kids. People come away with a greater respect for these trees after taking the tram tour. It is not like reading signs. You already have the Tuolumne Grove and Merced Grove which are difficult for people to access. A huge % of Yosemite is wilderness. Let's protect that. But let's keep some of it accessible to all people, not just the young and fit.

Another comment, I am an avid horseback rider and have ridden thousands (literally-one year I rode 500 miles in the summer in the park) of miles in Yosemite. Please do not eliminate stock use from the grove. Now that I'm older I enjoy so much riding from Fish Camp to Biledo through the grove. There are MANY other riders who feel the same way. We obey the rules and stay on the outer loop.

I have also heard that you are considering turning the snowplay area parking lot into parking for the Mariposa Grove. If you do that I hope you will consider providing good parking for horse trailers up the road then. It is a safe place where us riders can park and then enjoy the National Forest trails.

After reading about the Merced River Plan and the Mariposa Grove project, it seems to me the direction you want to go is to keep more and more people out of the park and basically head the direction of a hikers only park. This is not fair. Some of you people planning all this ought to think about how some day you might not be able to hike like you can now to see things and how are you going to like it then. Let's not build new infrastructure and roads where there are none now but let us keep what we now have.

Correspondence ID: 51 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,05,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Gentlemen, As a couple who hike Mariposa Grove monthly, we have a few suggestions. 1. There should be a nice foot path

from the new parking lot to where the parking lot now stands. In the winter when the road is closed there are a lot of people who walk the 2 miles back, and beyond. Lovely hike. Would be even better if it went through the trees where possible. Those shuttle busses are always full. We would rather walk back. 2. Better information and path that is currently from the tunnel tree to Wawona. 6 miles is a lot for some, but there are a lot of people who don't even know about that option. One questions, will the gates be closed even on off days before 8AM when the entrance booth is maned? Hope this helps you better plan the park and not make it so visitors can't get to Mariposa Grove. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 52 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,08,2013 15:49:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I agree with the plan. Whatever it takes to restore the habitat of the sequoias should be done. As long as there is some accessibility to those who want to reach the grove then that is fine.

Correspondence ID: 53 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,09,2013 14:11:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I support alternative 2, a reasonable and worthwhile way to protect this beautiful grove.

Correspondence ID: 54 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,09,2013 17:32:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: "The primary goals of the Mariposa Grove EIS are to restore giant sequoia habitat and the natural processes that are critical to the long-term health of trees, and to improve the overall experience for visitors to the grove."

I feel that if the overall experience for visitors to the grove is set as the primary goal, than the restoration of habitat will be an outcome of this project, rather than listed as an additional goal.

Great care must be taken by the NPS to avoid alienating their visitors by making dramatic changes to the commercial environment these visitors have grown accustomed to. I think removing the Mariposa Grove Tram would alienate the visitor.

Although I like the overall idea of Alternative 2, the preferred option, to remove the parking lot and gift shop in the lower grove, I dislike the idea of removing the commercial tram operation. While the tram does consume fuel and leave behind exhaust, its removal from Yosemite will eliminate another opportunity to provide the thrill of an adventure to a visitor.

Whether you have ever walked down to your local store for an ice cream with your dad, have been driven to Grandmother's house for a visit by your mom, or have taken the Mariposa Grove Tram around the biggest trees you have ever seen with your class, there is a certain excitement in being with your family & friends on an adventure with someone leading the way.

In addition to that feeling, that 'someone' is an extremely important part (if not the most important part) of the reason Americans have National Parks to enjoy! This person is the skilled park employee, making lasting memories and teaching the history of the big trees and how we have come to be able to enjoy them in the manner that we do. This employee is an ambassador of Yosemite and it is his/her job to help plant the seed for a child to cultivate. If a child simply remembers a wonderful visit to the park years from now, that is counted as a success. If a different child begs their parents all winter long to come back next summer in order to be a Junior Ranger, that is another success. And if a different child returns to the park years later with a biology degree, responding to an announcement for an interpretation job in the Mariposa Grove because they never lost the magnificent feeling of being led through those wonderful trees by that 'someone' who obviously cared about involving others in helping to conserve the amazing parks we have, that is a tremendous success!

We need to keep the NPS employees ability to reach people at a premium. I look at the tram as one such tool for the NPS. These tools allow them to help make people aware of what is special in Yosemite and ultimately instill active preservation & conservation of Yosemite in their visitors. For these reasons I recommend that with adjustments rather than elimination of the tram, Alternative 4 be considered as the best alternative.

I don't believe we* can afford to estrange any potential visitors during an era of spending freezes, park closures, misinformation and political fighting. THANK YOU for the opportunity to comment!

[REDACTED]

*I use the word 'we' because although I do not work for the US Dept. of the Interior or any level of the Yosemite National Park Service, I feel it is my duty as an American citizen to help protect Yosemite National Park alongside its employees.

Correspondence ID: 55 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Mar,11,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: I would like to share my thoughts with you about the Mariposa Big Trees and the ice skating rink at Curry Village.

My husband and I enjoyed the Tram Ride many times with family members and friends. It is a "God Send" when the elderly and disabled cannot walk this beautiful area. I could never understand why we needed a gift shop.

The ice skating rink is something special for young people who love to go there with Grandpa and Grandma; a beautiful winter day filled with many memories. Why is it necessary to remove this fun activity for the young and the old?

Thank you for letting me express my views on this matter.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 56 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Oct,22,2012 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Kimball Koch,

I wish to thank you and the NPS representatives who were present at the October 9th Public Site Visit to the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias. I found it very informative. I am sorry that I had to leave early to retain my ride back to the original meeting site.

I favor the parking complex being moved to the area adjacent to the South Entrance. I agree that placing this complex east of the entrance station makes sense, and provides a safer environment for pedestrians and vehicular traffic, versus an earlier idea to place it to the west of the entrance station. I had two topics that I would like explored further. 1. I was concerned that the new entrance kiosks would be placed over an area identified as a wetland on the map. I was curious, if the kiosks are staggered, or moved to the south, if the wetland could be retained with less interruption to water flow. 2. I am not a big supporter of traffic circles where there is a potential for pedestrians. I have witnessed how impatient pedestrians attempt to cut across the center, rather than going around, resulting in hazardous situations. I like the intersection concept "F" better. The transitions appear to be cleaner, and take up less space. Pedestrians need only to watch for oncoming traffic from one direction source at a time.

Thank you, again for holding the site visit. Thank you for the work you have done to protect these special trees. Please share my thanks and appreciation with Sue Beatty, and the other Sue (I am sorry that I did not get her last name) who accompanied us and shared valuable information about the natural resources to be protected during this project. I look forward to the DEIS release.

With Regards,

Correspondence ID: 57 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,13,2013 13:13:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comment on the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove Of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Statement

4/2/2013

b United States Department of the Interior National Park Service Superintendent, Yosemite National Park Attn.: Mariposa Grove DEIS P.O. BOX 577 Yosemite, California 95389

Superintendent,

This comment is in response to the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The National Park Service (NPS) prepared this Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to assess alternative plans for restoration projects for the Mariposa Grove within Yosemite National Park (NPS 2013). In the DEIS, the NPS presents a no action alternative and three actionable alternatives to restore natural conditions, protect cultural resources, and improve access for visitors at the Mariposa Grove (NPS 2013). This DEIS builds on the 1980 General Management Plan for Yosemite National Park. Under the 1980 General Management Plan, Mariposa Grove is designated as a primary park location for visitors (NPS 2013). The 1980 General Management Plan also stated that only facilities that were consistent with the preservation of the giant sequoia ecosystem would be provided and that these facilities would be upgraded to meet standards and stop negative resource impacts (NPS 2013). The NPS identified several issues that are currently having a negative effect on the Mariposa Grove. The natural hydrologic function of the Mariposa Grove is currently disrupted by the presence of roads, trails and buildings (NPS 2013). Roads and trails within the Mariposa Grove have caused damage to the giant sequoias, compacted soil, and exposed shallow root systems (NPS 2013). The water system within the Mariposa Grove is currently leaking chlorinated water into the system (NPS 2013). The NPS has also identified ten factors that are affecting visitors to the Mariposa Grove within the DEIS (NPS 2013). The factors include lack of universal accessibility to the Mariposa Grove and visitor facilities, disruption of natural soundscapes by the commercial tram service, and lack of parking (NPS 2013). The NPS evaluates a no action alternative in the DEIS. Under the no action alternative the current situation would remain the same. This alternative has

a large cost associated with it. Between transit operations, vehicle replacement costs, and deferred maintenance cost the total cost would be an estimated \$24,300,000. Alternative two, the south entrance hub alternative, is the first actionable alternative discussed. Under this alternative most of the infrastructure within the Mariposa Grove would be removed (NPS 2013). The removal of buildings, public parking, and tram operations would allow for restoration actions on wetlands and surrounding giant sequoia habitat (NPS 2013). These restoration activities would include soil preparation, surface contouring, and the planting of native vegetation (NPS 2013). All visitor facilities would be moved to the south entrance. Improvements to the south entrance would include expanding the parking lot from 30 spaces to 269 spaces, new visitor restrooms, and a new septic system and leach field (NPS 2013). To allow for better accessibility for visitors with disabilities, vehicles with accessible parking placards would still be allowed to travel into the lower Mariposa Grove area (NPS 2013). Alternative two leads to a net reduction of 0.05 acres of developed land project wide (NPS 2013). Total cost associated with this alternative is estimated at \$20,711,000 for construction and \$19,500,000 for maintenance (NPS 2013). Alternative three is the Grizzly Giant hub alternative. Under this alternative, the Grizzly Giant area would become the main access point for visitors and infrastructure would be removed from the lower grove area (NPS 2013). A new road would be constructed to bypass the lower grove area (NPS 2013). The existing road between the lower grove area and Grizzly Giant would be removed and converted to a hiking trail to allow access to the lower grove area (NPS 2013). Tram and shuttle services within the Mariposa grove would be discontinued under this alternative (NPS 2013). A 189 space parking lot would be built at the Grizzly Giant hub and the south entrance would retain the original 25-30 parking spaces (NPS 2013). No new septic systems or leach fields would be constructed under this alternative due to difficulties in delivering water to this area (NPS 2013). Alternative three leads to a net increase of 0.5 acres of developed land project wide (NPS 2013). Total cost associated with this alternative is estimated at \$22,798,000 for construction and \$0 for maintenance (NPS 2013). Alternative four is the last actionable alternative discussed within the DEIS. This alternative is very similar to alternative two. Under alternative four, infrastructure would be removed from the lower grove area (NPS 2013). The south entrance would become the main access point for visitors (NPS 2013). The same improvements to the south entrance under alternative two would occur under alternative four (NPS 2013). The major difference in alternative four is the continuation of tram service into the grove (NPS 2013). Alternative four would lead to a net increase of 2.13 acres of developed land project wide (NPS 2013). Total cost associated with alternative four is estimated at \$14,300,000 for construction and \$3,400,000 for maintenance. The three actionable alternatives share a set of common actions. These common actions include improvements to infrastructure such as the water system and Wawona Point (NPS 2013). The gift shop in the lower grove area would be removed under all three alternatives (NPS 2013). Universal access for visitors with disabilities will be improved under all three alternatives (NPS 2013). Fire management, visitor education, protection of cultural resources, and hydrology improvements are also addressed by all three alternatives (NPS 2013). The goal of this DEIS is to restore natural conditions within the Mariposa Grove. Though some restoration activities such as wetland restoration, soil preparation and removal of infrastructure are discussed at length, fire is not. Fire return interval for the Mariposa Grove was every 3 to 15 years (NPS 2013). After decades of suppression, the NPS began to use prescribed fires within the Mariposa Grove in 1971 (NPS 2004). Although fire has now been reintroduced, these prescribed fires are still not meeting the historic return interval of 3 to 15 years. The Mariposa Grove prescribed burn unit (PWMG) is 518 acres in total and split into 13 subunits (NPS 2004). According to the 2004 Fire Management Plan, these 13 subunits have seen various amounts of prescribed burning activity (NPS 2004). Some units have been treated up to four times (MG4) while other units (MG12) have yet to be treated with prescribed fire (NPS 2004). Some of the subunits (MG8, MG6) that have been treated with prescribed fire have not been treated since the mid-1970's, a nearly 40 year lack of fire within the ecosystem (NPS 2004). Fire plays a critical role in the regeneration of giant sequoia (Shellhammer and Shellhammer 2006). Regeneration in giant sequoia groves that have a thick layer of litter and duff due to lack of frequent fire is low to nonexistent (Shellhammer and Shellhammer 2006). The multi-year prescribed fire schedule listed in appendix six of the Fire Management Plan only forecasts to 2009, more recent information on prescribed fire in the Mariposa Grove would be beneficial to the DEIS (NPS 2004). Grove vicinity fire management is listed as an action that is common to all action alternatives within the DEIS (NPS 2013). While the Mariposa grove has seen some prescribed fire, the areas surrounding the grove have high fuel loads and are still susceptible to intense wildfire that threatens the Mariposa Grove (NPS 2013, Raymond and Peterson 2005). In Appendix C: restoration plan, the NPS states that conducting prescribed fires and fuel treatments outside of the Mariposa Grove is a priority (NPS 2013). The appendix also mentions that some of the areas targeted for treatment include lands managed by the United States Forest Service (NPS 2013). None of the alternatives mention any cooperative efforts to coordinate with the United States Forest Service to accomplish this priority. This DEIS seems to focus mainly on the restoration of wetland areas of the Mariposa Grove. Studies from Kings Canyon National Park, California have shown that tree height and continued growth after establishment is more dependent on light availability in burned areas than moisture (Shellhammer and Shellhammer 2006). Gap dynamics and prescribed fire use don't seem to be sufficiently discussed in relation to giant sequoia establishment and growth within the DEIS. The DEIS also mentions the removal of paved roads within the Mariposa Grove. Restoration efforts in this situation will involve soil treatments to deal with compacted soils. The DEIS mentions two heavy equipment options to decompact soil. The use of a bulldozer or a skid steer with a ripping attachment are the two options mentioned (NPS 2013). These options are both effective but do have limitations. Bulldozers and skid steers both have fixed ripping implements attached to them (Archuleta and Baxter 2008). This can create the potential for the equipment to re-compact the soil surface that they have just treated when positioning to treat part of the area that was not reached during the previous pass (Archuleta and Baxter 2008). This could limit the effectiveness of the mechanical treatment by destroying soil macropores and therefore decreasing water movement, decreasing soil aeration, and restricting root growth (Archuleta and Baxter 2008). I would suggest that the NPS analyzes the potential of other heavy equipment types for this project. Excavators are now being used as multipurpose subsoiling machines. United States Forest Service personnel from the Umpqua National Forest have developed implements for excavators that allow these machines to accomplish multiple tasks (Archuleta and Baxter 2008). These implements allow excavators to subsoil while spreading organic matter over the project site (Archuleta and Baxter 2008). Subsoiling followed by the addition of organic matter has been shown to drastically increase water infiltration and reduce erosion potential (Luce 1997). An excavator could also be used to contour areas of the project that require it (Lloyd et al. 2013). The use of an excavator with a multipurpose implement could decrease the time involved with restoring these areas, lessening the potential for these treated areas to experience runoff, and increase belowground productivity (Archuleta and Baxter 2008, Lloyd et al. 2013, Luce 1997). I would like to thank the NPS for the opportunity to comment on the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Statement. This is a very interesting proposal to restore one of Americas first government protected natural areas for the future enjoyment of generations to come. Sincerely,

References Archuleta, J.G., and E.S. Baxter. 2008. Subsoiling promotes native plant establishment on

compacted forest sites. Native Plants Journal. 9:117-122.

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Luce, C.H. 1997. Effectiveness of road ripping in restoring infiltration capacity of forest roads. *Restoration Ecology*. 5:265-270.

National Park Service. 2004. Final Yosemite Fire Management Plan. USDI National Park Service Final Environmental Impact Statement No. NPS D-1153A. Yosemite National Park, Yosemite, CA.

National Park Service. 2013. Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Statement. USDI National Park Service Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Yosemite National Park, Yosemite, CA.

Raymond, C.L., and D.L. Peterson. 2005. Fuel treatments alter the effects of wildfire in a mixed-evergreen forest, Oregon, USA. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research*. 35:2981-2995.

Shellhammer, H.S., and T.H. Shellhammer. 2006. Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) seedling survival and growth in the first four decades following managed fires. *Madrone*. 53:342-350.

Correspondence ID: 58 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr.14,2013 14:06:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I along with my family operate Yosemite Trails Pack Station. We have a Commercial Use Authorization to guide horseback rides into Yosemite National Park from the Sierra National Forest.

For the last 48 years my family has been escorting small groups of the people to the Mariposa Grove. It's about a 2 hour ride from our Pack Station and we stop and take short break just to the south east of the Grizzly Giant. We cater to many segments of the general public, many of whom have physical limitations and would not be able to make the trip other then riding in a car.

Certified as a Mast of Leave No Trace by National Outdoor Leadership School, I make sure our impact is kept to an absolute minimum. In fact, most park visitors don't even know we are there.

With regards to the Mariposa Grove Draft Environmental Impact Statement, I support the No Action Alternative. If on the other hand this option is taken off the table, I strongly request that our ability to access the Grizzly Giant not be diminished by the final plan. Our ability to provide access to the public would be severely curtailed and the financial consequences to our family run company would be catastrophic.

Thank you for consideration in this matter, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 59 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr.13,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Please DO NOT remove the tram from the Grove. Many people will not be able to make the walk to see them.

Correspondence ID: 60 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr.15,2013 18:04:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I wholeheartedly support Preferred Alternative #2. I am especially in support of removing the tram for a number of reasons: 1) To prevent damage to the trees, 2) To preserve the dignity of the trees by eliminating the noise caused by the trams and the PA system, and, 3) To restore the natural sound-scape of the grove.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my opinion.

Correspondence ID: 61 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr.15,2013 18:05:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Re: Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, DEIS, February 2013

We probably agree on the goals of this project: 1. Preserve the Grove for future use 2. Optimize the experience of your customers (the general public)

You have selected Alternative 2 (South Entrance Hub) as the "Preferred Alternative" and presented Alternative 3 (Grizzly Giant

Hub) as another viable option.

Let's examine how Alternatives 2 and 3 stack up against each other. You have presented both options as preserving the Grove for future use, so it would appear to come down to how well these Alternatives meet the second goal: Optimizing the experience of your customers.

1. Alternative 3 delivers customers to the Grizzly Giant area. This allows customers to distribute themselves uphill and downhill in the Grove for less concentration and a lower impact. Alternative 2 concentrates everyone at the lower grove - which is contrary to both goals.b (

2. Alternative 3 enhances customer access to the upper grove - without the use of trams. This is particularly important for the young and elderly, since Alternative 2 does not include trams.b (

3. Alternative 3 significantly reduces the need for shuttle buses to the Grove. Shuttle busses would be a year-after year YNP expense in Alternative 2. b (

4. Alternative 3 simplifies access for the elderly and families with young children to access the Grove with their wheelchairs, strollers, etc.b (b (

These customers could also return to their vehicle if they tire and have to wait for the rest of their family - enjoying the Grizzly giant area while they are waiting - rather than returning to the less-interesting South-Entrance parking lot.b (

5. Alternative 3 locates most toilet facilities more centrally and conveniently, instead of concentrating them at one end of the Grove.b (

6. Alternative 3 helps remove a significant amount of summer vehicle and pedestrian congestion from the already too busy South Entrance. (The South Entrance could still be upgraded somewhat for Grizzly Hub overflow.)

In summary, Alternative 3 appears optimum for your customers in every regard. YNP believes Alternative 3 is more difficult due to the need for a new road and the lack of electricity and water at the Grizzly Hub.

President Kennedy once said (about going to the moon): "We do these things not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

YNP should select the harder Alternative 3 now - in order to make access easier and enjoyment greater for current and future generations of their customers.

Wawona

Correspondence ID:	62	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Apr,17,2013 09:29:11				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I attended the public meeting at the Tenaya on April 12, 2013 . It was good to meet the park representatives. The presentation was very informative and gave everyone a good perspective on the plans for the Mariposa Grove. It is of up most importance that the groves be protected. A lot of the amenities such as the gift shop are not a priority. I agree the parking lot could be moved and trails re-worked. On a personal note, it is important for our family that some compromise be made on the trams. We are fourth generation family members that are enjoying our beautiful national park and surrounding areas. We recently had elderly relatives travel all the way from Italy to view the magnificent grove. They could not believe what they were seeing! It was a high point of their visit to the United States. Because of their ages and mobility they would not have enjoyed this experience without the tram system. At our advancing age, we will not be able to enjoy the grove with our next generation by hiking the trails. Please take this compromise into consideration. Thank you.				

Correspondence ID:	63	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Apr,17,2013 13:54:17				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Personal comment Mariposa Grove Rehabilitation EIS				

17 April 2013

Don Neubacher, Superintendent Mariposa Grove Rehabilitation EIS P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

We concur, preferred alternative 2 will best restore and protect the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoia from decades of resource degradation and excessive vehicle congestion in the lower Grove and the multiple impacts of commercial tram service throughout both the Lower and Upper groves. Relocating as much infrastructure as possible from the prime resources in both the Upper and Lower groves and relocating the necessary elements of those facilities to the proposed new visitor parking and staging hub near the south entrance station will help restore the natural quality of this prime resource area.

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 64 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,20,2013 11:09:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

All alternatives appear an improvement over the present shameful situation. It's good to finally see the Park Service attempting to live up to its preservation mandate and not simply bowing to California's political and economic demands for unfettered accessibility to the natural wonders which were the Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley. I hope that in the not-to-distant future we see similar limitations set on visitation to the Valley itself. In my opinion the Park Service has a lot of work to do in repairing the inexcusable harm it has done the Valley by packing it full at every opportunity and allowing seemingly unchecked development down there. It has for a long time now seemed that the NPS at Yosemite has been driven by \$20 bills as opposed to a quality visitor experience along the Merced River. Time to step up and take control. This EIS is a start.

The preferred alternative(2)is the one I would support, and I would urge a continued policy of limited developement and access to a place which could yet be peaceful, powerful, and inspiring.

Correspondence ID: 65 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,22,2013 18:00:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

If private automobiles are to be allowed into the grove at all it should be only for those visitors who are unable to use the shuttle. The visitors' experience and the health of the trees will be enhanced by keeping automobiles out.

Correspondence ID: 66 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,23,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence:

Hi,

I'm a researcher working for the Sierra Club and am currently reviewing the Mariposa Grove Restoration Plan.

I had a few clarifying questions about the plan but was unsure where to ask them. I was wondering if you had any suggestions about who to contact and where send some questions.

Thanks, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 67 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,23,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence:

Will the plan use prescribed burning to enhance new growth

Correspondence ID: 68 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,23,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence:

From: [REDACTED] Date: Tue, Apr 23, 2013 at 9:23 AM Subject: Mariposa Grove DEIS To: Yosemite <yose_planning@nps.gov>

After listening to the presentation and reading about the different plans we think that the number two plan for the restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias is the best plan. It is a plan that gives greater consideration to water resources, thereby giving greater protection to the health of the trees in the future. The enjoyment of future generations is just as important as the present. Plan number two is a good compromise. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 69 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,27,2013 03:46:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

If the Tram grinds up the grade with its PA blaring can you hear it? Only while enjoying the silence of the Grove. If NPS is forced to Tram people through the grove, how about rickshaws without a PA blaring "".... and here's the famous Telescope Tree, twenty people can easily fit inside and gaze up 188 feet to see the stars at night..." Indeed, this is the canned speech heard round the grove. [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 70 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,27,2013 09:38:51

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I was born and lived in California until 1994 (48 years there). I grew up visiting Yosemite and treasure its irreplaceable beauty. I understand the need to limit access as it is killing that which we love. I hope that as much as can be eliminated so far as "amusements" will be. Amusement parks are available elsewhere. I believe the National Park system was created to prevent commercial development and popular destruction of these extraordinary places. Keep Yosemite as pure and natural as you can. Let those who are lucky enough to come there to leave few if not any footprints. Thank you for this opportunity [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 71 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,28,2013 08:56:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As a long time visitor to Yosemite Park, I am strongly in favor of alternative #2. This is clearly the best plan to restore the giant sequoia habitat, and it does not compromise a visitor's experience of the park in any important way to use a shuttle bus instead of driving in.

Thank you for your attention.

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 72 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,15,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Ms. Acree:

We are responding to your March 15, 2013 request for comments on the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, Yosemite project. The project is located near Rainer Cree, in Section 18, Township 5 South, Range 22 East, Mount Diablo Meridian, Latitude 37.50759, Longitude -119.60170, Mariposa County, California. Your identification number is SPK-2012-00682.

The Corps of Engineers' jurisdiction within the study area is under the authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, such as the Mariposa Grove and South Entrance wetlands as (described on DEIS page 3-47). Project features that result in the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States will require Department of the Army authorization prior to starting work.

To ascertain the extent of waters on the project site, you should submit the wetland investigation report prepared in 2011 (as described on DEIS page 3-46) to our office for review and approval. The report should meet the Sacramento Districts "Minimum Standards for Acceptance of Preliminary Wetlands Delineations", under "Jurisdiction" on our website at the address below.

The range of alternatives considered for this project should include alternatives that avoid impacts to wetlands or other waters of the United States. Every effort should be made to avoid project features which require the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States. In the event it can be clearly demonstrated there are no practicable alternatives to filling waters of the United States, mitigation plans should be developed to compensate for the unavoidable losses resulting from project implementation.

Please refer to identification number SPK-2012-00682 in any correspondence concerning this project. If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Dadey at the letterhead address, email Kathleen.a.dadey@usace.army.mil, or telephone 916-557-7253. For more information regarding our program, please visit our website at www.spk.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory.aspx.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] Chief, California South Branch

Correspondence ID: 73 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,17,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Yos Nat Park, I work at the Mariposa Trees. I see and talk to peopel all day. I see lots of familiys kids dipers, strollers, young people old peopel. Peopel with a lot of time peopel who only have on hour to spend at the trees. the tram is great for so many people. So why do you want to limit only the healthy to see the Upper Grove. The Upper Grove is like heaven so why limit only to the healthy to see the or the young. I'm sure with all the money from the conservancy they can find a way to get the tram to the upper grove in an environmentally way. The Snack Shop is no different thatn the shop at Glacier Point. Peopel need snacks botteled water, rain coats and shelter in a storm. Trucks can make deleveries in the very early morning or at night. How about a big parking lot in Wawona there is lots of flat ground in Wawona and you don't have to clear out a lot of trees.

Thanks

Correspondence ID: 74 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911

Received: Apr,22,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Don Neubacher:

I am writing my comments for the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees Plan. Please share this letter with that team. I appreciated getting the Draft Environmental Impact Statement Plan. I attended the meeting Tenaya Lodge on April 12th and they were very helpful.

I was born in Yosemite. My father, [REDACTED] became Sales Manager for the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. My mother [REDACTED] managed the Lodge gift shop and the worked at the Yosemite Credit Union. My first time visiting the Big Trees was as a child. I rode in my parents car and we drove through the whole grove including the Tunnel Tree. We also ate lunch at the Big Trees Lodge. When I was older I went with my Dad and some friends to the Wawona Stables. We rode horses up to the Wawona Grove of Mariposa Giant Sequoias. Dad was our guide. We ate dinner at the Big Trees Lodge. Then we rode the horses back going through the Tunnel Tree. It was full moon by the time we rode back to the Wawona Stables. Is that trail still maintained for horse back riders?

I favor ther preferred Alternative 2 Plan. I think there should be parking at the South Entrance and then trails going into the grove. The last time I was at the lower grove was in June 2011 when there was a big snow pack. There was snow on the ground and no trams. It was so peaceful walking up the road through the big trees. I do believe there should be no more trams. Hopefully taking thre road out will help with drainage in the wet lands. These trees are too special no to take these steps to protect them!

I think of all plans being made for Yosemite, protecting these beautiful Giant Sequoia trees is the most important. I hope the plans can go foward next year as part of the 150th Anniversary of the Yosemite Grants signed by President Abraham Lincoln.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 75 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,09,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Response to the Mariposa Grove DEIS -

I am sorry to see that the preferred alternative does away with the tram altogether. I would be in favor of alternatie #2 if it provided a means for people with limited walking ability to get to see some of the trees, including Grizzly Giant. The other main groves are out of the question for these folk, thus leaving Mariposa as the only grove they can access. The accessible trails are fine for the wheel chair using people, but I'm talking about the ones who can walk. Uphill, and at altitude for those with lung, heart, and arthritis problems, is beyond their ability. They need the tram. It need not be as extensive as now, but something needs to be provided. How about horse and buggies? - then the pavement could be removed and a different surface that is permeable could be placed for them. Golf carts might be a possible solution. If there is no transport for these people with limited walking distances included in alternative #2, then I'd vote for alternative #4.

Correspondence ID: 76 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,30,2013 12:46:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Comments on the Mariposa Grove Draft EIS

1. Moving the parking lot from the Lower Grove to the South Entrance and restoring the Lower Grove is a good project and should be the highest priority project. 2. My major concern with the project is the proposal to eliminate the tram tours. As a Yosemite Conservancy volunteer(note: I am writing personally and do not represent YC) I have spent a month during each of the last 4 summers in the Upper Grove at the Museum. I have observed thousands of visitors on the trams stand in awe as they gaze at the majestic sequoias. For most of these folks it is an experience that they could not otherwise enjoy were it not for the tours. If the NPS can restore the Lower Grove to "recreate" the same experience as visitors have in the Upper Grove then eliminating the tram tours is acceptable. I propose maintaining the tours with a start point at the South Entrance until the Lower Grove restoration is complete and provides a similar experience as the Upper Grove. 3. What to do with Clark's Cabin/Museum? The proposed usage to repurpose the building as a hiker's shelter doesn't make any sense. Left unsupervised it will be subject to vandalism or perhaps worse. The building itself is fragile (especially the roof) and if left unmaintained over time it will decay and become a nuisance eventually requiring its removal. I propose moving the cabin from the Upper Grove to the Lower Grove or South Entrance to continue its use as a Museum or visitor contact station. The Museum site could be restored returning the site to meadow. I would recommend signing the area especially to point out the young and adolescent sequoias that grow near the cabin. 4. Maintaining the Comfort Station in the Upper Grove is a waste of resources once the tram tours are discontinued. Hikers to the Upper Grove number in the few hundreds per day currently and not everyone uses the Comfort Station. The Comfort Station has the capacity to handle thousands of visits per day. I recommend dismantling the Station and moving it as well to the South Entrance or Lower Grove once the tours are discontinued. If a toilet is required in the Grove then keep the current vault toilet near the old hotel site and reroute trail to the current vault toilet. This allows for elimination of the trail that currently cuts through the Rattlesnake Creek meadow and facilitates complete restoration of the meadow. Rerouting the trail should be done regardless of the disposition of the Comfort Station and vault toilet. This can be accomplished by using the road/trail. 5. I also recommend removing the water fountain at the Museum. The proposal is silent on this; but it might be assumed since it discusses moving the water treatment unit and storage unit to the Lower Grove. The hikers can surely carry their own water. Signs can be posted at the trail head warning hikers that there is no water available in the Upper Grove. This

assures that the treatment station can be moved downslope to the Lower Grove. If the water fountain stays, then the treatment facility must be maintained in the Upper Grove. 6. By taking these steps (moving the Museum and Comfort Station, removing the water fountain and rerouting the trail around Rattlesnake Creek Meadow) the Upper Grove can be completely restored returning it to near Wilderness. 7. By removing the flush toilets at the Upper Grove Comfort Station and the water fountain the only remaining reason for keeping an access road to Wawona Point is to maintain the communications equipment at the Point. If another feasible and more accessible location can be found for this equipment, I recommend moving the communications equipment. Thus the road between the Grizzly Giant to the Upper Grove can revert to a pedestrian trail only and the Upper Grove could returned to Wilderness status. 8. In the Preferred Alternative the current tram ticketing and turnaround area is to be repurposed to a small transit hub. I recommend that the turn around area be restored since it contains a number of sequoias; and that the transit hub be constructed in the area currently occupied by the snack shack/office and current shuttle bus parking area. 9. The proposal in the Preferred Alternative to realign the road at the entrance to the Lower Grove should be accelerated to reroute the road so that it does not cut through the ravine and does not pass close to the sequoias.

Correspondence ID: 77 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,30,2013 21:46:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Yosemite is one of California's treasures! And the Mariposa Grove is part of that. I would love to see you go along with plan 2, and keep the area in the most natural state it could be and protect the trees. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 78 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,01,2013 21:08:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: hello, and thank you for taking my comment

I love the GIANT SEQUOIAS they are an awesome part of nature that has brought to my mind and spirit a humility and a strength unmatched. I agree with a larger parking area moved outside the park to allow for visitors to more easily access the grove. Although i do not agree with taking the tram tour out. I am not confident that this service is hurting these trees as much as you say. I do believe that measures can be taken to improve the drainage and other things. Again i do not agree with the removal of the mariposa grove tram tour. I have taken the tour in the recent past and enjoyed it very much. I was educated and the tram seemed to be a clean running transportation. Improvements can be made, although removal is not the right thing to do.

THANK YOU [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 79 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,03,2013 23:09:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am totally against the Alternative 2 proposal.

This is a public Federal park supported by the taxes of people like us who have been working our whole lives & can now begin to enjoy the fruits of our labors such as Yosemite park including the sequoia trees in Mariposa Grove. You are denying elderly people like us (70+ years)to be able to see these beautiful giants because we are not able to hike or even walk 2 miles in normal terrain let alone in the Mariposa Grove forest at 5,000 to 6,000 feet high.

You have stated there are over 484 mature giant sequoia trees in the grove. We were recently there to see the trees and the few trees that are affected by the roads, parking, gift shop & trams are less the 10 percent. To cut off the entire grove from visitors because of these few is absurd. Move the tram road to avoid these trees. We did not notice any excessive noise pollution in the area. To the contrary. The Grove is quiet & serene. And as for the generator that supplies power to the gift shop & ticket booth, spend our money more wisely & purchase a more modern & quiet one.

This would be a total disgrace to the visitors of Mariposa Grove to deny them such beauty & spiritual experience.

I say put in more time to this proposal What's the rush.

Correspondence ID: 80 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,03,2013 23:55:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please have your signs asking people to NOT walk near the Sequoia's base in more languages than English. We recently visited and the couple ahead of us seemed unaware of the signs as both went right up to the tree to take their picture touching the tree. They were not speaking English so probably did not understand the signage.

Correspondence ID: 81 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,04,2013 09:52:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: SIERRA CLUB COMMENT ON MARIPOSA GROVE DRAFT EIS

The Sierra Club supports the Preferred Alternative 2, South Entrance Hub, removing most development from Mariposa Grove and relocating the visitor services and parking to the South Entrance. We thank the National Park Service for a Preferred

Alternative that protects and improves the environment in the Park and especially the Giant Sequoia groves and trees. We especially support removal of the Tram Service, which will protect the grove and the Sequoia's shallow root systems, allow for a more natural experience, and reduce air and noise pollution. We also applaud the relocation of most parking from the Grove to the South Entrance Hub and the provision for universally accessible pathways in the Grove. Sequoia Groves are sacred places and should be as free as possible from human development. As a part of the Preferred Alternative, the Sierra Club supports the Actions Common to All Alternatives, including the ecological restoration, the removal of the gift shop in the Lower Grove Area, the Fire Management measures, and the provisions for universal accessibility. We also support efforts to maximize protection of the Pacific Fisher's den habitat.

Correspondence ID: 82 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,04,2013 13:50:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Dear NPS, I support the Preferred Alternative 2, removing most development from Mariposa Grove and relocating the visitor services and parking to the South Entrance. The Preferred Alternative protects and restores the environment in giant sequoia groves. I especially support removal of the Tram Service, which will improve and protect the natural grove, allow for a more natural experience in the Sequoias, and reduce air and noise pollution. I also applaud the relocation of most parking from the Grove to the South Entrance Hub, and the provision for universally accessible pathways in some parts of the Grove. I encourage the Park Service to maximize protection of the Pacific Fisher's den habitat. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 83 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,04,2013 18:01:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: May 4, 2013

Yosemite National Park Attn: Mariposa Grove DEIS P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Comments from CSERC for the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias DEIS

The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias within Yosemite Park contains roughly 500 mature giant Sequoia trees that are among the oldest, rarest, and largest living organisms on our planet Earth.

The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias within Yosemite Park contains roughly 500 mature giant Sequoia trees that are among the oldest, rarest, and largest living organisms on planet Earth.

Whether we repeat that Park DEIS information once or multiple times, the very fact that this Grove contains such old, rare, and incredibly large organisms is of pivotal importance when it comes to a decision on how to manage this priceless, irreplaceable natural wonder. As Don's letter at the front of the DEIS spells out, these trees so inspired visitors and political leaders, President Abraham Lincoln chose to permanent preserve the Grove in 1864.

That historic heritage and decision to permanently protect the Mariposa Grove serves as just one of many important reasons to now utilize the best available science, management strategies, and long-range vision in deciding what next steps should be taken to truly protect and enhance not just individual giant trees, but the rare ecosystem of this giant Sequoia grove.

With that key goal in mind, CSERC strongly supports the Park's Preferred Alternative, Alternative 2 as the best management option to protect and restore the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias.

The following comments underscore why Alternative 2 is both the correct choice for legal and compliance reasons and also for ensuring that future generations have the healthiest, best managed Grove ecosystem passed on to them by those of us who are contributing input to hopefully shape management direction today.

Put simply, the American public and the Park Service share the responsibility to protect and restore iconic natural treasures on National Park lands in the highest possible condition. Alternative 2 best meets that responsibility.

BACKGROUND FOR THESE COMMENTS

The Park Service can take pride in the many positive management actions the agency has taken over the years to protect key features of the Mariposa Grove and to provide for widespread visitation by those seeking to experience its giant trees. There is no need to assign blame for paving over the roots of giant Sequoias in the Lower Grove or to criticize the Park Service for managing the Grove more as a scenic destination than as an ecological area of significance. Resource management has evolved considerably over recent decades, however, and it is essential that the Park Service rely on the best available science for decision-making and management direction.

With that in mind, a number of current problems at the Grove help to justify the selection of the Preferred Alternative. Those problems include:

b " Natural, ecological processes and functions of some portions of the Grove have been degraded, altered, or diminished due to the road layout, interference with subsurface flows and surface discharge, inappropriate use of pavement, compaction of soil due to vehicles and excessive visitation, and the ripple effects of noise and disturbance caused by vehicles, the tram system, tram tour discourses, high levels of visitation, and other impacts caused by so many people and vehicles in a limited area.

b " The quality of the visitor experience is lower than it could be if the Mariposa Grove was managed in a manner more consistent with General Management Plan direction and other Park goals. The Grove could be managed as a natural cathedral b a truly inspiring opportunity to experience a unique ecosystem that is carefully managed to make it accessible to large numbers of people (rather than the Grove being managed primarily as a busy, commercialized, scenic attraction dominated by the tram operation, with difficulty finding a parking space, with shopping promoted for souvenirs, and with few options for quiet and solitude).

DEIS Goals Support Need For Alternative 2

The DEIS notes that the primary goals of this project are to restore degraded habitat and natural processes critical to the long-term health of the Grove, and to improve traffic circulation and the overall visitor experience. Those are goals that directly support the General Management Plan.

Page 1-7 of the DEIS contains the following:

"The management goals identified in the General Management Plan (NPS 1980a) for the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias includes the following:

b " Retain the Grove as the primary park location for visitor enjoyment and interpretation of giant sequoias b " Provide only those visitor facilities consistent with preservation of the giant sequoia ecosystem, and remove all other facilities not necessary for visitor enjoyment of the resource b " Upgrade facilities to eliminate resource impacts and meet current standards."

Clearly, key portions of the General Management Plan goals direct the Park Service to provide only visitor facilities consistent with preservation of the giant sequoia ecosystem and to upgrade facilities to eliminate resource impacts.

Our Center believes that it is not an option for the Park to disregard those two clear legal directives.

Accordingly, if a management option contains the retention of facilities that are not consistent with preservation of the giant sequoia ecosystem or if a management option for facilities will fail to eliminate resource impacts, those alternatives or options do not comply with the clear legal direction of the GMP. CSERC asserts that the Park is obligated to act and desires to act consistent with the General Management Plan direction b which is to retain only facilities consistent with preservation of the giant sequoia ecosystem.

The tram system with all its associated disturbance and impacts, the existing intrusive parking lot in the Lower Grove, the undesirable bathroom facilities in the Lower Grove, the paved road running throughout the overall Grove, commercial services within the Grove, and the concentration of visitor use around the Grizzly Giant are all management impacts that conflict with the GMP.

As examples of the DEIS acknowledging resource impacts of Alternative 3 and Alternative 4, the DEIS on page 3-89 acknowledges that Alternative 3 would introduce new vehicle traffic along the new Grove Bypass Road. Then on page 3-43) the DEIS acknowledges that adverse impacts to special status species would occur in areas previously unaffected by roads, vehicle transportation and access facility operations.

The DEIS describes for Alternative 4 (on page 3-45) that the commercial tram operations would continue to keep the existing road in use and continue to cause operation-related impacts on special status species as described in Alternative 1. Commercial tram operations would be reduced in the Upper Grove, but continue unchanged in the Lower Grove, and thus, would result in greater potential for adverse operations-related impacts compared to Alternative 2.

The bottom line is that Alternative 2 provides management direction that is consistent with the GMP directives, while Alternatives 3 and 4 do not provide consistent direction with GMP goals.

CSERC supports numerous key actions proposed in the Preferred Alternative that would correct or at least significantly improve the degraded Grove ecosystem and the visitor experience.

South Entrance Hub

Our Center supports the Park's proposal to construct a South Hub and eliminate parking for most visitors at the Mariposa Grove.

Our Center is supportive of the construction of a trail from the South Entrance Hub to the Grove. However, as shared at the

Grove meeting in Yosemite Valley, we are concerned about the impacts this trail may have on critical Pacific Fisher denning habitat if it is constructed along the proposed route. As Park staff is aware, there is documented proof that a denning furbearer (of high concern) selected a den site in the general area of the South Entrance b Mariposa Grove. It is not appropriate for our staff to pinpoint the location of the site where we got hundreds of photos of the rare furbearer over a month of photo surveys, but your staff wildlife biologists have that data. What is appropriate is for the Park planning staff (in coordination with Sarah and Lindsay and others) to ensure that any trail connecting visitors at the South Entrance (South Hub) area to the Mariposa Grove area be a trail that is not located where major disturbance to prime furbearer habitat will occur.

The majority of fisher sightings and road kills have been along the Wawona (and Big Oak Flat) roads (3-38). These furbearers are already under stress from their proximity to roads and a major center of human activity at the entrance and the Grove.

A reasonable alternative to constructing the trail in its proposed location would be to modify the main Mariposa Grove road to accommodate a walking and/or bike path along the shoulder to avoid a high degree of human disturbance into critical furbearer habitat.

The configuration of the proposed parking area at the South Entrance Hub originally proposed a design that would have resulted in paved parking overlapping a 0.24- acre wetland. As Park planning staff has already agreed, this impact is entirely unnecessary as equivalent parking could be provided North of the wetland, closer to the Mariposa Grove Road, or other design modifications could avoid the wetland. Alternative Parking could also be provided across the Mariposa Grove Road adjacent to the current parking that will be converted to bus parking. If the parking was replaced across the road from the main parking area, sufficient pedestrian crossing would have to be provided to allow visitors to access the shuttles and services offered in the main parking lot. The amount of parking needed to be located across the road would be minimal, so the pedestrian vehicle conflict would also be minimal.

As planning staff already intends, the Park should ensure that if Alternative 2 is selected, the Parking lot at the South Entrance Hub is designed and constructed to avoid impacting wetlands, while providing sufficient parking in alternative locations nearby.

While our Center is not supportive of the commercialization of scenic, iconic places, we do believe that the new South Entrance Hub would be an appropriate place for the concessioner to have a facility to sell books, gifts, drinks, snacks, and basic necessities or other items. Visitors will be congregating here on their way to the grove after a long drive or returning to the grove after a day experiencing the grove. Visitors who come unprepared or underprepared can reasonably be provided the opportunity to purchase a cold drink and a snack, or to purchase educational or gift materials tied to the Grove.

A gift and food facility at the South Entrance Hub would provide a needed visitor service in a location that would not impact the Grove.

Realignment of Mariposa Grove Road approaching Lower Grove

There are a number of concerns with the proposed realignment of the Mariposa Grove Road south west of the Lower Grove at the "entrance curve." The DEIS states that "these actions would improve safety, protect giant sequoias from erosion in the drainage, which could threaten their stability and long-term survival, and increase the roadway capacity for tour buses" (3-107). Increasing the capacity for tour buses is unnecessary since the proposed Preferred Alternative will only allow tour buses less than 40 feet to access the Lower Grove. The problems caused by the shuttle buses needing to cross the double yellow lines would be much less of an issue because the amount of traffic on the road would be reduced to primarily shuttle buses and tour buses. Realigning the road is not the only option for protecting the giant Sequoias from erosion in the drainage. Engineering an appropriate crossing and restoring the ravine would sufficiently protect the previously impacted Sequoias without introducing new impacts to Sequoias by realigning the road.

The proposed realignment would require construction of a new bridge within 50 feet of three mature Giant Sequoias. The root systems of mature Sequoia extend up to 200 feet from the tree (3-9). With 68% of all mature trees apparently located within 175 feet of road centerlines, it is questionable as to whether the Park should additionally affect these three mature trees by placing a bridge and road within their root zone (3-9). CSERC asks that the Park carefully consider the ramifications of any realignment or any bridge construction. The current road configuration has already affected certain Sequoias and their roots, so it does not make as much sense to introduce new impacts to trees that have not yet been impacted. In addition, water quality would still be threatened by the bridge: "the new vehicular bridge at the Three Sentinels near the lower Grove would be particularly vulnerable to degraded water qualityb &" (3-62). Additionally, the road realignment would, as far as has been established thus far, require the removal of 30 Giant Sequoia seedlings/Saplings and 5 juvenile (DBH 15"-30") trees (2-46). The minimal benefit of the road realignment should be carefully compared with having such an impact on the Giant Sequoias.

The realignment is also of concern because of the extra amount of construction it would require in the immediate vicinity of sensitive species. Spotted Owl, Pallid Bat and Pacific Fisher are all especially sensitive to human presence and disturbance. Spotted Owl are known to be nesting within just over a mile from the Parking lot and actually foraging in the parking lot itself (3-37). Colonial roost sites for Pallid Bats have been found in Giant Sequoias in the lower grove, West of the Grizzly Giant and near commercial tram parking (3-38). However, in the big picture, it is the overall management of the Grove and visitation to the Grove that overwhelms any short term construction impacts on sensitive wildlife species. According, CSERC's strongest concern is the possible continuation of the intrusive tram system, the intrusive private vehicle use coming to and from the Grove (if Alternative 3 were selected), and other cumulative impacts caused by high levels of human use.

Tour Buses Under 40 Feet Long Accessing the Lower Grove

Allowing tour buses under 40 feet long to access the Lower Grove would continue to degrade the soundscapes for visitors in the Parking lot and on trails nearby, especially when the buses idle instead of turning off their engines while loading and unloading passengers. Shuttles do not pose the same impact because they are alternatively fueled. In light of this, we suggest the Park require all tour buses accessing the Lower Grove to shut off their engines while loading and unloading passengers. Idling should not be allowed in the Lower Grove. There is not an adequate analysis of the impacts of idling tour buses in the Lower Grove in the Soundscapes analysis (3-87-88). The document states that the "experience in the lower portion of the Grove would now be more like that in more isolated areas of Mariposa Grove and allows visitors to experience natural quiet and sounds," which is not entirely true when one considers the noise and pollution of the idling tour buses (3-88).

We request the Park include in its preferred alternative that tour buses accessing the Lower Grove must shut off their engines while loading and unloading.

Associated concern tied to tour buses at the Grove:

Allowing tour buses under 40 feet to load and unload at the Lower Grove means that the restroom facilities at the Lower Grove will be the first opportunity for those passengers to have access to a restroom. Our Center is concerned that this may cause an unnecessary stress on the leach field in the Lower Grove.

The Park should include in its analysis whether the leach field is designed to support this kind of capacity. If the leach field is not going to be able to keep up with the influx of passengers from the shorter tour buses, the Park should request that the shorter tour buses allow their passengers a restroom break at a facility with a greater capacity.

CSERC strongly opposes allowing any commercial Tram Services

CSERC supports the elimination of commercial tram services in the Mariposa Grove. There are many reasons not to allow a tram system in the midst of one of the most spectacular natural sites in America.

First, the trams themselves dominate the site when they are present. They distract from the natural scene. They reflect an urbanized setting rather than a remote, unique, natural setting. The tour operators' interpretive oratory can be heard for long distances in the Grove b reducing the peace and quiet and greatly diminishing the sense of being in a natural surrounding.

The trams unfairly allow well-funded visitors the opportunity to ride up into the Grove while economically challenged Grove visitors cannot afford such extremely expensive tickets. The use of the long trams results in retaining the paved road which is not as conducive to the natural processes within the Grove. Because the tram is fee-based it is not compliant with accessibility standards (3-157). Accessible trails are a much better option as they would be compliant and "offer visitors of all levels of mobility the opportunity to experience giant sequoias and the natural sights, sounds, and smells of the Grove away from vehicles, in a more solitary, quiet and natural setting" (3-163).

Accessibility

Our Center supports providing access to those who have limited mobility. However, we do not feel that it is necessary to allow those with placards to utilize their private vehicles in the Grove.

We request the Park provide accessible shuttle service so that all private vehicle use can be removed from the Grove.

Upper Grove Loop Road to Trail Conversion

While it is a step in the appropriate direction to convert a portion of the Upper Grove loop road to a trail, the Park should not overstate the benefit to the Giant Sequoia from this action. Having a hard packed trail, regardless of its width, is still going to impact the roots to some degree. Water will be better able to infiltrate the soil, but the structure and composition of a healthy forest soil will still be absent. It is certainly beneficial to remove the asphalt and allow the trees to continue to grow. However, only complete removal, decompaction and restoration of the road would fully relieve the roots of the Sequoia from the stress caused by having a hardened surface on top of them.

SUMMARY OF CSERC KEY COMMENTS

Alternative 3 is unacceptable in part because of its impacts on the Pacific Fisher due to increasing vehicle traffic and the near-certain impacts high levels of traffic will have on the highly vulnerable at-risk fisher population.

Alternative 4 is unacceptable because it would continue the tram service in the Lower Grove which interferes with the opportunity for Grove visitors to experience solitude, a highly-natural setting, and a sense of distance from urbanized sounds

and visual impacts.

For consistency with the Purpose and Need of the project, for consistency with the General Management Plan, for consistency with various laws and regulations tied to special status/sensitive wildlife species, and for consistency with the desire to pass along the Mariposa Grove in the most natural, healthiest condition possible to future generations, the Park should select and adopt Alternative 2 b the Preferred Alternative.

Our Center also notes that at a time when the Park is celebrating and preparing to further celebrate historic actions that led to the preservation of Yosemite and its spectacular Valley and giant Sequoia groves, it is especially timely to take actions that can be viewed a century from now with praise for the long-term significance and vision of management decisions.

CSERC urges the Park staff to creatively and responsibly embrace this opportunity to return the Mariposa Grove to the most natural, most inspiring, most breath-taking, and most ecologically sustainable condition possible. We urge the adoption of Alternative 2 b the Preferred Alternative.

Respectfully submitted,

██████████ executive director On behalf of the staff and members of the Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center

Correspondence ID: 84 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,04,2013 20:59:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

I recently returned to Yosemite for the first time in about 15 years, bringing my children specifically to see the Sequoia trees. I was shocked to find out how much more difficult the access to these trees has become since I was a child ... even before your plan to move the parking some significant further distance down the road. For most people, this will now force them to take the trams. Sadly, the park service has enabled a monopoly on park services by the highly profitable Delaware North company, which not surprisingly, and again sadly, is a major lobbying force in Washington. We walked up to the museum, then thought about taking the tram down, only to be shocked, actually aghast, at the fee that Delaware North charges for that service. It's a short tram ride. One can take a bus from Las Vegas to Salt Lake City -- a distance of 300 miles -- for \$25. Why should this short tram cost so much, except of course, you have enabled them to have a monopoly on seeing the Sequoia trees for anyone but a relatively fit hiker. Older people, the disabled, and people with children, or just limited time, have no choice but to pay whatever it is that Delaware North deigns to charge.

So, here's an idea. License two tram operators. Delaware North can operate the red trams and anyone else can operate the blue trams. Only in this way can we be sure that a monopolistic operator cannot take advantage of the park's unique assets, to the detriment of consumers.

There's a large Federal Trade Commission in Washington that tries to ensure competition in normal trade. Why they haven't looked into the park service is beyond me.

So, the bottom line is that the changes should not be made, unless you can provide competitive tram services so that the elderly, the young, and the disabled, and other, can enjoy the trees without being gouged.

Correspondence ID: 85 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,05,2013 06:03:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

I am disheartened by the possible removal of the tram as access for limited mobile persons, like myself. When I first heard about the plan on the radio, I physically felt depressed. If it were not for the tram, I would not be able to experience the beauty and majesty of the magnificent groves. I am NOT wheel-chair bound; however, my knees are so bad that it would be impossible for me to walk completely along the trails among the grove.

In the past, I have been able to take the tram to the top, and then, using canes, slowly walk down the trails among the grove. It renews the spirit to be able to stop and meditate amongst the old giants. (Can I suggest more logs or benches to sit upon and rest?)

I am now 66 years old, and have been a life-long resident of California. I have been able to enjoy the sequoias since a child. My father, also a native Californian, taught me to enjoy the beauty of nature as a child when we could camp at Curry Village (yes, I did see the firefall). Unfortunately, with advancing years both my husband and I are very limited in our walking. In the recent past, the trams have been the only way that we have been able to be deep into the grove.

Suggestion: To limit the noise and distraction of the tram, I would like to suggest this new invention..... electric vehicles. No noise, no pollution, no problems. There are porous surfaces than could help with water permeation. If the roadbed is the problem, then consider a raised roadbed across critical terrain.

I am a life-long supporter of Yosemite, and my husband and I have been coming annually (for a full week in the Spring) for the past 3+ decades, and frequently before that as we grew our family during our younger years. We'll be down at Yosemite Lodge

from May 5 - 11, 2013, as usual. I hope to be able to make the trip up to the Grove this week.

My husband, the cynic, thinks that the purpose of the Park Service, recently, seems to be to limit the National Parks to only rangers and staff; and make it harder for common folk to enjoy what should be ours. (This even goes to the Valley plan to remove the bike rental kiosks..... how stupid is that, when we want to encourage people to ride their bikes on bike trails thereby reducing vehicle traffic). I hope he is wrong.

PLEA: As a person of limited mobility, PLEASE DO NOT END OUR LIMITED ENJOYMENT OF THE PARK, BY LIMITING OUR ACCESS (ie. removing the tram). THEREFORE, I VOTE FOR ALTERNATIVE #1 OR #4 (ONLY BECAUSE THEY PRESERVE THE TRAM).

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID:	86	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,05,2013 13:20:18				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Sir,				

I appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees.

The team has done a stellar job of educating and developing of this Draft.

I favor Alternative 2, the Preferred choice to managing the Grove.

Option B is my preference as a Leach Field location. I think this function is best opporated as far from Giant Sequoia habitate as possible, and public activities.

Transportation to the Grove could be improved with a twice a day Shuttle bus from Yosemite Valley in the Summer months. This would aid Grove planning during peak use and secondarily reduce hydrocarbon influence.

Otherwise I like Alternative 2's maximizing Grove habitate compared with the other Alternatives.

Thanks, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID:	87	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,05,2013 14:37:00				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I support Alternative 2 which would restore the Mariposa Grove area to a more natural setting. I agree that parking lots, roads and the noisy invasive tram should be removed, so that the setting is more pristine. John Muir might well be horrified if he could experience the current "scene" at the grove on a busy summer weekend. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.				

Correspondence ID:	88	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,06,2013 01:06:41				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Yes, I do agree to the primary goals set by the Plan: restoring habitat and natural processes and improving the overall experience for the visitors to the Grove. I have worked in the Grove for eleven (11) years and in the Park for 30 plus years and have truly enjoyed watching visitors fall in love with Yosemite. I have also dealt with visitors that were not satisfied with the experience they were having, verses what they expected to have while visiting Yosemite. Alternate 2, the preferred, would reach the primary goals, but to fewer visitors. Is that a hidden goal?? I agree to remove the parking lot, but please consider Alternative 4, for it allows the greatest improvement of the visitors experience, and still reach the primary goals. In Alternate 2 by removing the parking/trams/generator and shop would be the best thing for the trees and animals. A few accessible parking is great, with the accesible trail,but without a tram and tram road, you have now put up a barrier. Are we not suppose to be removing barriers? Also, by removing the operations(Kiosk and Gift Shop)unprepared visitors are totally without necessay items and information. The concession staff is very knowledgable and is there from 7am to 7pm daily at the peak of the summer season. We not only sell water and tours, we also call 911(bee stings, broken legs, low sugar, heart attacks, lost person, etc) and also give directions on how to see the Grove, Park or how to get to the Bay Area.				

I hope that Alternative 4 will be revisited. It removes the parking and restores the lower Grove. I will love it!! I truly would like to see it without a parking lot or the generator. I just believe that visitors need a Gift Shop and the opportunity to see the trees. By not have a tour many visitors that have memories from family vacations and are creating them for their children, would not be able to. Some arrive not knowing that they can not longer drive through the Tunnel tree, that Dad or Grandpa drove them through(many have a photo). With Alternative 2, now they would not even be able to see the California Tree, unless they are in shape to walk that distance at this elevation(more 911 calls, now without a kiosk or store with a phone).

Sorry, I went off track. Please change your preferred to Alternative 4. Restoration of the lower Grove and not putting up more

barriers for the visitors, by allowing the trams to operate.

Correspondence ID: 89 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,01,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Fax
Correspondence: Gentlemen:

Following are my comments regarding the preferred alternative of the Mariposa Grove Plan as outlined in the meeting held at Tenaya Lodge on April 12th:

1. Hiking trail from South Entrance to picnic area and extension thereof to Lower Grove. I seriously doubt there is enough demand for this to warrant the expenditure of funds to do this and keep it maintained. Those funds could be put to much better use elsewhere. The existing trail from the South entrance is gnarly and has numerous elevation gains and losses. I'm sure the majority of visitors would prefer hiking IN the Grove rather than expend their energy on a hot South facing slope hiking 2+ miles to get there. It was also mentioned that this trail goes through old growth forest which should be protected instead of having a trail built through it.

2. Public parking in the Grove. The preferred alternative only allows 50 "seasonal" public parking spaces for use when the shuttles stop running for the season, and eliminates public parking in the Lower Grove the rest of the time. In addition to these "seasonal" spaces, additional year-round public parking in the Lower Grove area on a first come first serve basis could be made available on the unpaved leach field of the bathrooms. I would like to see the feasibility of this option explored by the NPS.

3. Expanded shuttle service from the South entrance. The preferred plan calls for expanded shuttle service in the shoulder months. It is silent on the start times for the shuttle. With the centralization at the South Entrance of traffic to the Grove, expanded hours will also be necessary in order to avoid congestion in the mornings. Currently the public parking lot in the Grove fills up by 9:00 a.m. in summer. With the elimination of public parking in the Grove, the start time for the shuttles should be no later than 7:30 a.m. during the peak season to better manage the flow of visitors into the Grove.

4. Rehabilitation of Wawona Point. I am greatly in favor of this as Wawona Point is currently in a deplorable condition.

5. Realignment of Grove road to eliminate curve at 3 Sentinels and installation of a bridge bypass. I am greatly in favor of this.

6. Conversion of South portion of Upper Grove loop road to hiking trail. I like the idea of this provided that all of the other trails in the Upper Grove would remain intact.

7. "Limited" shuttle service from Wawona to the Grove. Daily shuttle stops to Wawona during the summer months should not be less frequent than 1 per hour or visitors will end up driving from Wawona to the South Entrance to catch the shuttle when they want to go to the grove.

8. Also mentioned in the preferred alternative is that visitors taking the shuttle from Wawona will be dropped off at the South Entrance to then have to board another shuttle to get into the grove. This is ridiculous. Shuttles from Wawona should go all the way to the grove and stop at the South Entrance to pick up additional passengers to fill up the bus.

9. Tour bus parking. I am in favor of eliminating tour bus parking in Wawona and relocating it outside the South Entrance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Correspondence ID: 90 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,01,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Parking: Put a parking lot outside YNP up the Snow Play Area Road. It's a short walk to the Grizzly Giant.

Correspondence ID: 91 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,06,2013 11:30:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I object to the proposals being made for the removal of the stone bridge and facilities at Yosemite National Park. Contrary to how those who object are painted, I am a former employee of a California National Park, an environmentalist and lover of the outdoors. Therefore be assured that I am not 'anti-environment'. I have also been a visitor to Yosemite National Park - the first time back when there was still the firefall. This proposal is but another step toward the end goal of declaring the area Wilderness and eliminating all access to this Park. This is what is being attempted by another bill proposed by Mike Thompson for the Snowy Mtn preserve in Napa, California. I urge everyone who reads this to review the map that can be found by searching "UN Agenda 21" - which shows the end goal of this proposed action. Any 'harm' to the environment by the current visitor facilities was 'done' many, many years ago. Yosemite was formed for the use of the public - to be used by the public. These efforts to

reduce and ultimately eliminate our ability to 'use' the Park must be stopped. The estimated \$250,000 million it will cost to remove the facilities and 90+old stone bridge is money we do not have and if we do have it, it could be better spent.

Correspondence ID: 92 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,06,2013 15:04:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am against any proposal to limit access to one of America's most beloved National Park, Yosemite. Leave things alone, because any removal / demolition of facilities will be unto itself a environmental impact on the trees. Quit wasting money on these kinds of studies and use the money for park maintenance. If it is too crowded, use congestion access pricing like they do on carpool lanes. This variable pricing can be adjusted seasonally as well as for holidays. I am sure the NPS could use the extra money for maintenance or staff anywhere in the NPS system.

Yes conservation is one of the goals of the NPS, but I believe the bigger goal / mission of the NPS is to enable and not limit access: this is why we call it a park versus a federally protected forest. It is park visitors / users who are the customer taxpayers that politically support funding NPS, not the bears and raccoons. Yes the big trees should be conserved (we should look but not touch/molest), but they by nature are a hearty bunch, surviving hundreds of years. They will be here long after we are dust. I don't think there is anything wrong with thoughtful development, for example the NPS has done this by paving worn hiking paths to prevent further foot user damage. If people stay on designated paths and watch their speed, they should be permitted to ride their mountain bikes or wheelchairs into remote areas.

With gas prices going up, fewer visitors visit the parks each year. If you limit access to popular parks, this is another barrier to not go. The NPS will soon go the way of the post office if NPS does not have a business plan to encourage more customers. I find it ironic that we have to reach the internet generation with

<http://www.discovertheforest.org/>

to get young people to think about the parks and the outdoor experience. Not everybody can hike to these wonderful places (young children, seniors, handicapped), so auto access is very important to the parks. I enjoy the freedom of taking my own picnic lunch and stopping at a roadside picnic grounds: this freedom would be taken away if you have to use park buses and park vendors. There is nothing more wonderfully American than freely roaming the parks on established paths in your own transport modal, being a car, bike, snowmobile, boat, etc.

In summary, please do not limit park access in our wonderful USA.

Correspondence ID: 93 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,06,2013 15:34:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

While comparing the impacts presented in the executive summary for each alternative with the impacts presented in Chapter 3, it seemed that the results didn't align perfectly. This may be due to the fact that the impacts were being summarized, and therefore couldn't capture the complexity of the results. If this is the case, please clarify in the ES of the FEIS.

Comparing impacts of Alternative 3. Grizzly Giant Hub alternative, in the Executive Summary and Chapter 3, example:

In the executive summary: impacts on wildlife are listed to be long-term major and beneficial.

In Chapter 3, the conclusion for wildlife states: "Conclusion. Adverse impacts from construction and operations on wildlife are expected to be moderate at the Grizzly Giant bypass road and access facility and minor elsewhere within the Mariposa Grove and South Entrance. The moderate adverse impacts on wildlife would be associated with the construction of the bypass road and increased traffic through prime fisher habitat, along with the parking area and primary access facilities at the Grizzly Giant Hub. Project-wide, the net change in development under Alternative 3 would result in the addition of 0.50 acre in developed area which is comprised of 5.75 acre net reduction in of developed area within the Grove plus 6.25 acres of new development at the Grizzly Giant arrival area and new bypass road."

The discussion of the significance of the impacts only discusses adverse impacts. There is no discussion, specifically, of "long-term major beneficial" impacts associated. Please clarify in FEIS.

Correspondence ID: 94 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,06,2013 15:58:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

I strongly protest the removal of the tram to the upper grove. None of the stated goals in the "preferred plan #2" are benefited by the removal of the tram. 1. The tram roads will remain (some may be moved somewhat)because emergency vehicles will still need access to the upper grove. 2. Tram removal denies the public the opportunity to see the magnificence of the upper grove, for those who are not able to make the 4 mile long hike (round trip) with a 1200 foot elevation gain and loss. 3. The purpose of the national parks is for the benefit of the people. 4. Culvert drainage and waterway blockaes can be fixed without removing the trams. 5. Trail signs need replacing anyhow, as many are inaccurate. This has nothing to do with the tram. 6. I believe that these

comments are completely disregarded by those making decisions, as Plan # 2 is already being constructed. I note the removal of trees below the South Entrance, in preparation for the new parking lot. 7. I am an ardent advocate for the health of the Mariposa Grove, and for Giant Sequoias. I note that over the past few years "scientists" have stated that the age of these Giant Sequoias was 2000 years, then 3000 years, now apparently it is 1800 years. My point is that scientists keep changing their minds. They are not always correct. I do not believe that removing the trams from the upper grove will make the Giant Sequoias healthier. In fact, quite the opposite may result. With no trams, there will be far less official presence in the upper grove. There are 21 fewer part time rangers this year due to budget cuts. With less official presence in the upper grove, hikers may take more liberties than they currently do, and such liberties may harm the trees. I propose a modified Plan 2, keeping the trams in operation to the upper grove of the Giant Sequoias in the Mariposa Grove.

Correspondence ID: 95 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,06,2013 18:53:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Dear National Park Service,

I would like to let you know of opinion that the proposed Alternative 2 in the Mariposa Grove DEIS is the utmost importance to ensure the the grove is managed first and foremost to restore giant sequoia habitat, wetlands, and areas through removal of unnecessary infrastructure from within the grove.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 96 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,06,2013 20:17:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: To whom it may concern,

I do not pretend to understand what the full restoration plan entails; I do know some of the plans make a lot of sense; but on the other hand so much seems to take the general public out of consideration. It feels like you are giving us a time to submit comments without any real intent to take these concerns and voices with any seriousness at all. Kind of like nodding your head, fingers in both ears, smile on your face and saying "yes I hear you" then heading off to do what you had intended to do all along.

More parking is needed and the entrance needs attention, the line to enter the park is long in the summer. But the idea to remove all trams, close the museum, remove the store and other items seem a bit much. Granted trams, shuttles, garbage trucks twice a week....do bring a level of noise, however these are normal occurrences when you have services for people. And these services are all part of being good responsible stewards of the land you were given responsibility over. Not to take away some services because they might bring in some not appreciated noise, once you hit the trail to see the spectacular trees those noises are forgotten. The trams offer a once in a lifetime opportunity to many folks who may not be able to walk to the upper grove, our foreign visitors, families with little ones, the disabled or ill folks who have chosen Yosemite N. Park and the Mariposa Grove as their vacation place. Who are you to deny them this access? The recording on the trams is once again given by individual headsets, so there is no noise for folks to hear other than the vehicle, but that is truly in passing as there are other trails for the public to walk, they do not have to be on the road. The Galin Clark Museum should be left for all to see and ponder the setting where Mr. Clark so much enjoyed. Once again, who are you to deny this to the public, (those who cannot walk the distance).

The plans you have in place for the Merced River in the Valley and the Mariposa Grove do not seem to be public friendly. And the public is those of us who pay taxes for the privilege to pay an entrance to enjoy their public park. Please stop trying to limit access to the general population, locals, foreign travelers and all of our stateside friends who deserve the right to enjoy their park, see the marvelous views right before our eyes.

Please think before you put these plans in to motion. This park and all the others are public land with the Park Service as the custodian, servants of the public.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 97 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,06,2013 20:39:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I support return to wilderness as much as possible - remove the tram and all commercial uses.

Correspondence ID: 98 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,06,2013 22:44:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I write these comments coming form two points of view:

1. I stongly believe that a natural resource will only be important to a wide range of people if they can experience it personally. In this case that means that people will care about Giant Sequoias if they can travel to them and walk through their forest and

experience what it is like to be amid such majestic trees. Yet in my lifetime, the opportunities to do that have been significantly reduced. Fifty years ago when my wife and I started coming to Yosemite, one could (and we did) drive through the lower and upper groves and out to Wawona Point to see the very nice view. You could pull out at various points and walk through the trees. If you came into the park via Crane Flat you had to drive through the Tuolumne Grove as that was the only road in or out. Again, one could park and walk through the grove. When the new (and better) road was built from the entrance station to Crane Flat, the old road became down only, but one could still experience the trees with reasonable effort. Now it is walking only and the former road is very steep on the way back up, making it harder for those of us who are not athletic and getting older to see those trees and greatly increasing the time that it takes to do it. In the Mariposa Grove, the current arrangement was put in place, which I have found to be a reasonable situation. One can ride the tram. To see the view from Wawona Point, you can get out when the tram stops at the site of the fallen tunnel tree, and walk out to the Point and back. Then there is the very nice foot trail down through the forest to the Museum, which is the part of the grove that I have enjoyed the most. On the narrow foot trail, you got the real feeling of what the forest was like -- it was beautiful. I have walked from the parking lot to the Grizzly Giant and back, but the trail is so wide and there are so many people, you do not get the same feeling. I am going to Yosemite soon and I plan to ride the tram to the upper Mariposa Grove. The thought that I will never be able to see it again after that makes me very sad. There has also been a major reduction in the ways that one can experience the Giant Forest in Sequoia National Park. The Park Service has the dual and at times conflicting mandates to preserve the objects of extreme uniqueness and beauty and to allow the public to experience them. I feel that in the case of the Giant Sequoia trees the Park Service is going too far to the protection side.

2. In all of your alternatives there are provisions for persons with ADA permits in their cars. I am not such a person. However, my experience is that disability does not always come all at once. I have far less mobility and stamina than I did when I was in my 20's and 30's. Walking from the Grizzly Giant to the Upper Grove does not seem like a possibility for myself. I cannot do many stairs anymore without my knees getting very painful. Thus I found the new arrangement for access to the General Sherman tree at Sequoia to be not one that I could use.

In conclusion, I am alarmed and saddened by the cumulative effect of various Park Service decisions over the last few decades that make it harder and harder for people to experience Giant Sequoias. If your preferred alternative is adopted, it will mean that the only Sequoias that most people will see in Yosemite are those in the lower Mariposa grove. And they will do so on trails overpopulated by people as they all have all been herded into that one place. Those who do not have a lot of time and are not really fit will never go to the upper grove or Wawona Point. I have considered alternative plans 3 and 4. I think alternative 3 has problems as there is much new construction up by the grove and there is no fall back provisions when the parking lot gets full. However, I support alternative 4, as it maintains access to the upper grove for those of us who are not as fit as we once were and gives everyone a chance to have a less crowded experience because people will be more spread out.

Correspondence ID:	99	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,06,2013 22:57:53				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	May 6, 2013				

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park Attn: Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias DEIS P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

I believe that Alternative 2, is the best alternative of the four alternatives presented. I agree that relocation of almost all of the parking and visitor services to the South Entrance and the removal of the commercial tram operations and gift shop from the grove best protects the grove. However, there are some aspects that I wish to comment on.

I am concerned about the visual impact of the hub as you arrive in the park. I don't want my first view of the park, as I drive up to the South Entrance Kiosks, to be a large parking lot and associated structures. I don't want to feel like I am arriving at Disneyland. How well will the hub be screened from view along the 41?

Since there will be a new comfort station at the South Entrance Hub that would be ADA accessible, I would like to see any accessibility improvements to the current comfort station be abandoned. The current comfort station would then retain its historical look and significance to the area.

There are two aspects related to a person's sense of arrival to the grove that I am concerned about. If you get on a shuttle at the South Entrance, how will you visually know you have arrived to the grove when you are in a crowded shuttle and not a private car? A visitor's first view of the sequoias is currently the Sentinels, which gives one a hint of what is to come. How will the realignment of the road impact this first view?

Removal of the commercial tram service will mean that people with limited mobility will no longer be able to access the Upper Grove. The plan needs to provide some other alternative means for handicapped access. One possibility would be to allow private vehicles to drive on the service road. Another suggestion would be to have a small fleet of NEV's (Neighborhood Electric Vehicles) that the handicapped could use. There are several websites with examples of NEV's. One website is <http://www.polaris.com/en-us/gem-electric-car/Pages/Home.aspx>

The Tuolumne River Plan, the Merced River Plan and now the Mariposa Grove Plan all talk about basing crowding on what people find acceptable. I find this too subjective to be of use in planning capacities. What one person thinks is crowded can be

totally different to another person.

The Mariposa Grove Museum is a great example of National Park Rustic Architecture. Also, the museum offers a historical connection with the grove that a contact center located at the entrance could not. Many photos have been taken of this historic structure along with fellow travelers that allows a more personal connection to the grove. If the building were repurposed, there is a great potential for delay which will likely lead to deterioration and eventual removal of the structure. With that, another example of National Park Rustic Architecture would be lost.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias DEIS for their hard work in putting together this plan. A special thank you to Kimball Koch for taking time to talk to me and answer my questions.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID:	100	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 09:15:36				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I support the Preferred Alternative 2, removing most development from Mariposa Grove and relocating the visitor services and parking to the South Entrance. The Preferred Alternative protects and restores the environment in giant sequoia groves. I especially support removal of the Tram Service, which will improve and protect the natural grove, allow for a more natural experience in the Sequoias, and reduce air and noise pollution. I also applaud the relocation of most parking from the Grove to the South Entrance Hub, and the provision for universally accessible pathways in some parts of the Grove. I encourage the Park Service to maximize protection of the Pacific Fisher's den habitat.				

Correspondence ID:	101	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 11:01:01				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	I support Alternative 2. Taking out the Tram and moving the parking to the entrance station will help protect our magnificent Sequoia grove. The groves should be as free from development as possible; removing the Tram will also make for less air and noise pollution. I support universal accessibility, but there is no need for cars for handicapped access in the Upper Grove. Thanx to Park Service for a good plan and the right preferred alternative.				

Correspondence ID:	102	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 14:42:03				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Please leave Yosemite open to the public so my grandchildren can enjoy it as I did 60 years ago. We need to respect our Natural Resources, not close them to "We The People"				

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID:	103	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	E-mail				
Correspondence:	Please reply to # 2168 'CO 'DJ - MG May 7, 2013 Mr. Don L. Neubacher Superintendent Yosemite National Park P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389 Dear Superintendent Neubacher, DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc. (DNC) is pleased to provide comments on the Mariposa Grove Restoration Plan (Plan). We believe that the three action alternatives present a reasonable range of options to achieve many of the Plan goals, but that the visitor experience opportunities are not fully explored or represented. Accordingly, we have recommendations that we hope will find their way into the final plan for the Mariposa Grove (the Grove), which are summarized in the list below. We have included an attachment that provides more detail on our recommendations. 1. We believe Alternative 4 provides the best access to the Grove for diverse visitor groups, best meets accessibility requirements and goals, provides a quality service and interpretive experience that enhances visitor experience while still being protective of the trees and meeting the Purpose and Need of the Plan. 2. The Plan does not fairly present the value of commercial services, which has caused the services to be overlooked. We recommend that the gift shop be relocated to the South Entrance Hub in the final plan as this shop serves a large percentage of park visitors in a way that enhances their visitor experience. 3. The cumulative impact of Yosemite's plans (Merced River Plan, Tuolumne River Plan, Mariposa Grove Plan and others) is significant. A report on the cumulative impact of the plans should be provided to allow the public to understand the comprehensive impact on Yosemite's visitors and to provide a realistic assessment of the time frame and cost of implementation. 4. We are concerned that the Plan dismissed the need for a socioeconomic analysis without providing metrics to support that conclusion. We believe the preferred alternative will result in the loss of jobs and significant revenue to the park and a substantive change in visitor spending patterns. 5. We are concerned that the Plan does not adequately correlate actions related to parking, shuttle services, and traffic circulation and we are concerned that the preferred alternative may not be able to accommodate anticipated visitation to the Grove.				

We concur with the idea that this Plan should be "about the trees" and that the Plan presents well-thought actions to ecologically restore the habitat to improve the health of the Grove. We support and commend these actions and look forward to working with

NPS and others to achieve the Plan's goals. We appreciate being able to participate in this planning process. Please feel free to let me know if you have any questions or require clarification of any of the information presented. Y rs truly, Dan Je se
PresideInV DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc. Enclosure/Attachment to Mariposa Grove Response Dated May 7, 2013

DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc. Attachment to Mariposa Grove Response dated May 7, 2013 1. The NPS should select Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative as it retains a modified tram tour service, which better provides for a varied visitor experience, including comprehensive interpretation in multiple languages, and restores the Grove. The NPS should adopt Alternative 4 as the preferred alternative as we believe that retaining a fully accessible interpretive and educational service is in keeping with accessibility goals, improves visitor experience and provides for conservation of the natural environment. Tram tours provide an audio interpretive and educational-based experience, available in multiple languages, that is not otherwise offered in Alternative 2. The Plan notes that NPS is working on an interpretive services plan for this area, which will certainly benefit the experience of many visitors. However, the ability to engage in a guided tour is a valued experience as well. Self-guided tours work well for the visitor who chooses to experience the Grove at their own pace, can read in English, and is able bodied enough to make a strenuous hike to places such as Wawona Point. Visitors with young children, older visitors, or large groups benefit from an audio tour while riding to key scenic areas. The ability to ride, rather than walk to many of the popular destinations in the Grove, allows a diversity of visitors access to major attractions in the Grove, particularly given the topographic environment of the area, which includes steep and long hikes. Tram tours allow a visitor to ride to an otherwise unreachable location for many, and walk down. This is a benefit for visitors who are looking for a mix of interpretive, educational and self-discovery experiences in the Grove, or those who may be unable to make the hike up or those who have limited time. Trams also pick up visitors on the way down, free of charge, who may underestimate their ability, available time or may otherwise need assistance. We believe that the Plan may have undervalued the tram tours when choosing a preferred alternative in part because of the lack of a similar service in the Giant Forest in Sequoia National Park. The Giant Forest Restoration Plan has been a success for Sequoia, park visitors, and the trees and many of the actions called for in the Giant Forest Plan are similar to actions called for in this Plan, such as the removal of facilities and development to promote the health of the trees and their habitat. However, there are key differences between these two plans. The Giant Forest Plan called for a redefined visitor experience to promote walking and day-visitation as opposed to driving and overnight accommodation within the Giant Forest. Roads and structures were removed and trails were developed within previously disturbed areas to key destinations Page 1 ' Attachment to Mariposa Grove Response - DNC within the Giant Forest. These trails were developed in topographic areas that are considerably flatter than the key destinations in the Grove. None of the Plan alternatives propose to remove the main road throughout the Grove as it is retained for maintenance and service vehicles. Tram tours provide a service that is consistent with the GMP goals for the Grove by providing the best access for a diversity of visitors and by directly connecting the visitor to the trees with a quality interpretive experience. Tram tours are also consistent with the activities of auto-touring and sightseeing which the Plan states are the two most popular visitor activities in Yosemite. Further, the GMP did not call for removal of the tram tour and it called for maintaining the current level of visitation. Today, more than half of the visitation to the upper Grove comes from tram passengers. If that service is not available, we would expect far fewer people to actually observe the entire Grove. This could result in crowding and congestion at lower Grove areas such as Grizzly Giant, possibly adversely affecting natural resources and visitor experience at this popular destination. Because the topography of the Giant Forest and the Mariposa Grove are considerably different, the goals in the respective GMPs are different, and because the road in the Grove will remain under all alternatives, we believe the tram tours should also remain to continue to provide the visitor experience called for in the GMP. Additionally, prior to the time the road was closed to large motor coaches, the number of tram tours was triple what it is today. We would expect that the bus parking at the tram loading area will create a similar surge in visitor expectation for interpretive tram tours. According to the Plan, adverse impacts related to tram tours include noise issues and conflicts with pedestrians. The noise issues related to the trams' audio equipment have been addressed by the replacement of audio equipment in late summer 2011. This means that the audio is played over headsets to each visitor aboard the tram, so noise pollution from the audio equipment has been mitigated. We believe noise issues related to the trams' diesel engines are successfully mitigated in Alternative 4 with limits on operating hours and route. The Environmental Consequences discussed in Chapter 3 concluded the soundscapes were exactly the same for all three action alternatives, suggesting that the retention of a limited tram service under Alternative 4 would have no measurable adverse impacts to the natural soundscape within the Grove as compared to the other alternatives. Adverse impacts to visitor experience attributed to tram tours also cite pedestrian conflicts when walking along or crossing the road and encountering tram traffic. We believe that improvements to trail way-finding, which were noted as a considerable visitor concern in public scoping, will help reduce incidents of tram-pedestrian conflicts as it will be easier for visitors to stay on the trails. Where trails cross the road, appropriate signage could help improve this situation and the reduction in tram service hours called for in Alternative 4 will further reduce the potential for adverse effects. Page 2 ' Attachment to Mariposa Grove Response - DNC We would also note that the tram service benefits hikers who may have underestimated their abilities and need to flag down a ride to return safely. Trams typically pick up several hundred visitors a season under these circumstances, free of charge to the visitor. It is also important to consider that tram tours provide a significant beneficial experience for visitors who choose to take part in the service, which we believe might outnumber the visitors who find that their experience is reduced by the presence of the trams. One needs to question if the elimination of 100% of an experience valued by many is an appropriate action in relation to a perceived issue with an unquantified number of others. Finally, tram tours provide the Park a significant source of revenue which does not appear to be included in the cost of the alternatives, nor are we aware if this was a factor considered in the Choosing by Advantage work sessions (CBA) when evaluating advantages and the cost benefit of alternatives. Under fee provisions in the current concession contract, services in the Grove (tram and gift shop) contribute almost \$190,000 in direct fees annually to the National Park Service, 90% of which stays in Yosemite. The retention of tram tours will help preserve this revenue source for the NPS. 2. The NPS should consider the relocation of the gift shop to the South Entrance Hub in the final plan as this is a highly used, appropriate and necessary visitor service that was not fairly evaluated in the Plan. Considerable value is provided to many visitors at the existing gift shop and we believe it is appropriate to relocate this service to a new visitor hub in the location shown for the bookstore. Our sales records show that books and maps are the least purchased items at the existing gift shop and we wonder why the NPS appears to place higher value on retaining these commercial offerings over beverages, ice cream, postcards, sunscreen, apparel and interpretive merchandise. The gift shop provides retail and food and beverage service to a large percentage of Grove visitors. The Plan notes that nearly 25% of all park visitors visit the Grove during peak visitation summer months and other studies have shown that 58% of the summer time visitors are in Yosemite for the first time. This suggests that the gift shop, which is relatively isolated from other visitor retail and food/beverage services, provides a valuable visitor service. When one considers the composition of visitor groups (families and young children), it makes it likely that the

visitors cannot possibly be fully prepared for their outdoor experience and that the range of services at the gift shop will significantly enhance the visitor experience. In 2012 the gift shop sold over 29,000 beverages, 31,000 ice cream bars, 29,000 postcards, 4,400 apparel items 1,700 books and 297 maps in a 7-month period. These statistics suggest that basic beverage, snack and souvenir opportunities, as well as books and maps, are valued by many visitors to the Grove. The sales figures also Page 3 ' Attachment to Mariposa Grove Response - DNC suggest that a bookstore concept will not be sustainable as the retail volume will not support the staffing necessary to run the store. We believe the gift shop was not adequately described and evaluated in Chapter 3 in the affected environment section of Visitor Services and Recreation. We find this omission to be a significant oversight in the Plan and results in less than a fair analysis of the value of commercial services to the visitor experience. We believe if the service had been analyzed, the benefits provided to the visitor would be available for consideration by the public, which is being asked to comment on this Plan. Nearly 60,000 annual Grove visitors use the gift shop and the ability to purchase appropriate items without driving all the way to Wawona or outside the park enhances their visit. The gift shop supports visitor activities within the Grove by offering supplies that visitors may not have brought with them such as rain jackets for inclement weather or water and snacks. Given the heat, elevation and extensive trail system, it is appropriate for visitors to be able to purchase a drink or food before or after their trip to the Grove. Another benefit from the gift shop is that it provides a personal contact with visitors during the early and late weeks of the season before NPS staff is present. Without this contact point, a great amount of visitor service would be lost. This valuable guest interaction includes providing practical information to first time visitors and communication during emergency situations. Not only is this an added benefit to the commercial services provided at the gift shop, it is standard practice at all the visitor contact points for the concessioner, including the more than 1,300 interpretative programs conducted annually at multiple locations, and hiking tips and general information provided by associates throughout the park, just to name some examples. The Grove and South Entrance are relatively isolated from other visitor services and it appears that retail and food/beverage offerings at a new visitor hub are an appropriate and necessary visitor service. All these factors should have been discussed in the analysis of the Plan and in the development of alternatives, yet they were not. It is unclear why the gift shop was only briefly mentioned in the Park Operations section of Chapter 3. The maintenance and upkeep of the existing building do not appear to be the primary consideration related to this service and we can only conclude that the overall benefits the service provides and the consequences of removing it in all alternatives was not adequately disclosed in the Plan. We are encouraged to read that Alternative 4 implies that the gift shop could be relocated to the South Entrance Hub. On page 2-25, the Plan describes actions called for in Alternative 4, "Alternative 4, South Entrance Hub with Modified Commercial Tram Service, would remove public parking, the gift shop, and commercial tram staging from Grove, and relocate these facilities to the park's South Entrance," and again on page 3- 89, which discusses construction related impacts under Alternative 4, the Plan states: "The major noise-generating construction activities at the South Entrance related to the implementation of Alternative 4 would be the construction of the Visitor Contact Area that includes a museum, book/gift shop, information center and bathroom facilities." Page 4 ' Attachment to Mariposa Grove Response - DNC Another value of the gift shop operation that does not appear to be considered in the Plan is the revenue that this service generates. The gift shop contributes approximately \$50,000 of the \$190,000 in direct fees that are annually paid to the NPS from the services at the Grove. This revenue does not appear to be included in the cost of the alternatives, or considered in the Park Operations section, nor are we aware if this was a factor considered in the CBA. The GMP goals for the Grove call for the removal of visitor services that are not "consistent with preservation of the giant sequoia ecosystem, and remove all other facilities not necessary for visitor enjoyment of the resource," so we agree with the action to remove the gift shop from its location within the lower Grove; however, we believe that given the high use of the service, the value it provides to a large percentage of Park visitors, the relative isolation of the Grove area from other visitor services, and its generation of significant direct fees to the NPS, it would be appropriate to relocate the service to the new visitor hub area at South Entrance. 3. The cumulative impact of Yosemite's plans (Merced River Plan, Tuolumne River Plan, Mariposa Grove Plan and others) is significant. A more comprehensive summary of the cumulative impact of the plans should be provided to allow the public to understand the comprehensive impact on Yosemite's visitors and to provide a realistic assessment of the time frame and cost of implementation. As we stated in our comment letters for both the Merced River Plan and Tuolumne River Plan, we believe the NPS has not adequately analyzed the cumulative effect on the visitor experience and recreation as a result of significant park wide reductions, removal and/or limitations on visitor services and recreational opportunities and that the removal of the gift shop and the tram tours only compounds this concern. We are concerned that these and the many other services discontinued for a large number of visitors who choose to partake in them will significantly adversely impact the visitor experience for the majority of visitors to Yosemite. We recommend that the NPS issue a supplemental document that describes the cumulative cost, how the plans will be funded, ADA impacts and the reduction in visitor services, experiences and recreation options. 4. The Plan should analyze the effect on local and regional economies from its actions. The Plan should also address the requirement for additional NPS staff referenced in the document. Socioeconomic impacts were dismissed from detailed analysis in Chapter 1 with the justification: "The proposed project is not expected to result in measurable impacts on regional or gateway community economies, or changes in visitor attendance or visitor spending patterns as a result of the implementation of the actions described herein. Similarly, the project is not expected to result in growth-inducing impacts either Page 5 ' Attachment to Mariposa Grove Response - DNC regionally or in nearby communities..." We believe that the Plan fails to consider the loss of concessioner jobs and visitor spending that significantly affects concessioner revenues and Park fees. The concessioner operated services at the Grove generate revenues that annually provide the National Park Service approximately \$1 90,000 in direct fees. Ninety percent of this revenue is retained in Yosemite National Park. Not only was this revenue stream not considered in a socioeconomic analysis, it was not considered in the cost of the alternatives or in the analysis of Park Operations. The Plan states that implementation of Alternative 2 may require additional monitoring staff, but does not quantify this requirement. This issue may be more critical than it appears because much of the shoulder and peak season staff is now provided by the concessioner. We question if the combined loss of \$ 190,000 in the operating budget, potential additional losses in concession fees related to actions called for in this and other park plans, and the current challenges concerning federal funding will make this plan financially sustainable. These issues could be better understood in a comprehensive Socioeconomic and Park Operations analysis. If these factors had been quantified, we would have knowledge of whether the impacts could be classified as minor. Without framing the issue, it is not apparent that full consideration was given. We know that there are more than twenty jobs in the Grove relating to tram and retail services and that the visitor spending for the trams will not be replaced as this is a unique service. It is also obvious that the removal of the gift shop (replaced by a book store) will have similar adverse economic impacts. 5. We are concerned that the Plan will result in inadequate service to support visitation to the Grove. The shuttle bus from Wawona operates on 15-minute headways and transported more than 350,000 to the Grove during 2012. During a typical day, 15-20 tour busses stop to access the Wawona shuttle. Numerous concessioner traffic attendants are also situated at the South Entrance parking, at the Grove and sometimes at Wawona. Adding this traffic control staff creates capacity in the various lots beyond their static parking capacity, which is not factored into the analysis. We believe that a good number of

people who desire to visit the Grove and are sent to Wawona do not ever make the visit to the Grove. The same is true for visitors from the Valley, who experience the conditions described in the Plan. There has been no determination of the number of people who bypass the Mariposa Grove and the addition of a parking area at the South Entrance is no guarantee of reduced crowds or traffic. The congestion may just occur at a single location and perhaps later in the day with the modest increase in parking places. Page 6' Attachment to Mariposa Grove Response - DNC We are also concerned that the parking configuration shown in the Plan will be limiting as there is only space for four tour busses, the lot shows a single entry/exit location and the stalls for motor homes are head-in only, which could create traffic circulation issues. The Plan does not indicate how it ties to the MRP with respect to parking at Wawona or the continued use of shuttle service from inside the Merced River corridor. Further, there does not appear to be a comprehensive analysis of park-wide traffic circulation that would affect the Grove and South Entrance area. The Plan does not clearly indicate the metrics for how it will accommodate 100% of the peak day attendance and if there are contingencies to expand service, shuttle visitors, restrict access or take alternative steps if there is significant growth in visitation to this part of the park. The Plan calls for only 145 people per day to be transported from Wawona, which is a very low number on which to base any sort of transit system. It would appear a contingency plan is necessary in case the number of visitors expands significantly. Further, the Plan mentions a design standard at 85% of peak day visitation. It is unclear to us how this standard is being applied as it is necessary for certain plan elements (parking, for example), to be designed at 100% of peak day attendance to achieve the 85% standard elsewhere. Page 7' Attachment

Correspondence ID:	104	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 18:26:14				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				

Correspondence: I am extremely disappointed to learn of your plan to remove the Mariposa Grove tram. Is the evidence of forest damage from the tram road so concrete and overwhelming that the option of leaving and/or modifying the tram route cannot be considered? I don't know how long the paved surface has been there, but if the Mariposa redwoods are anything like my redwood was, by now the roots have thoroughly adapted. Be removing the paved surface and realigning water flows, you will most likely incur hardship on the trees by forcing them to readjust to your modifications.

I am a regular visitor to Yosemite, going back to the late 1950's when my dad, brother and I occasionally camped there. I most recently visited in February 2013 to photograph the Horsetail Falls sunset event. As I do on every trip to Yosemite, I visited the Mariposa Grove, one of my favorite places anywhere. The tram service was closed for the winter, so I struggled my way up to the Grizzly Giant and back. I wish the gift shop had been open b I had a few questions I was hoping to get answered, and I was hoping to get a new Mariposa Grove hat. You locals may disdain things like this, but if you think back to your own vacation experiences, it's not uncommon to get something you can use to reconnect with that special experience, or share with others who couldn't make the trip.

For those of us who rarely get a chance to experience the redwoods, a morning tram ride through the forest is an awe-inspiring experience. Last February I wanted to see and photograph the Upper Grove but was physically unable to do so. Apparently I will no longer be able to visit it in the summer months as well, because you've decided that only those with a lot of time on their hands and who are in solid physical condition are now worthy of the journey through the upper and lower groves. Wouldn't it be a better environmental lesson to allow a broader base of people to experience them?

I wish you could see the forest through the eyes of the first-time visitor. People who use the tram include multigenerational families, the elderly, and those in average fitness who may not be acclimated to higher altitude. They are by no means handicapped, but they cannot hike to the Upper Grove and back. This is their John Muir moment. For many it's a couple of hours of a person's life that will never be duplicated again. Without the tram many could not experience the Grizzly Giant and Upper Grove. Your plan to eliminate the tram won't enhance their experience; it will obviously eliminate their experience.

You wish we could see the forest through the eyes of its natural cycle, preservation, and the role of fires. If mankind did not exist, there would be no one to extinguish forest fires. Every summer the Yellowstone inferno of 1988 would be repeated somewhere else in the Northern Hemisphere. Humans grapple to maintain the forest, and think that we're doing the right thing by replicating as exactly as possible what we think Mother Nature would do. But visitors don't like viewing a forest that's been burned to the ground. Visitors get frustrated by fires because they lack the patience or longevity to see the forest return to its living glory. So how do we strike a balance? There are options b consider, for example, how humans are managing the world's oceans.

Marine scientists have learned that by sinking vessels and other man-made objects in strategic locations, we can create vibrant marine ecosystems in a very short period of time. Isn't it ironic that steel and other man-made materials are used to fool nature into producing such magnificent ecosystems? By thinking outside the box, we have converted undesirable man-made scrap into desirable sources of habitats. But is this the right thing to do? "Mother Nature" may have had no plans to create these specific ecosystems, but here they are, and doing quite well. Are these artificially created ecosystems a good thing for planet Earth, or aren't they? Should we now look back in hindsight and proclaim we must destroy them because humans interfered with the natural process? And what if the ecosystems are within protected areas, where tourists (scuba divers) are allowed to visit, learn, and interact b does that make a difference? There are lessons to be learned here that can be applied to how we manage the Mariposa Grove. Are the options that have been presented the best balance of forest preservation and a broadly fulfilling human interaction? Without a tram service like you have today, I see no balance.

During my February walk along the tram road, I observed someone from a conservancy organization giving a tour. The guide stopped next to a redwood and pointed out the water flowing adjacent to it, which he stated provided the tree with its own personal water supply. He then showed the permanent damage to the tree trunk caused by bears. Apparently damage caused by non-humans is considered acceptable and desirable because it is more "natural". I looked at this tree from top to bottom, and marveled at its condition in spite of its nearness to the paved surface. That tree (and others nearby) seemed completely oblivious

to the pavement. And with such an extensive root system, it's easy to see how it has persevered. I once had a small redwood in my side yard. It grew like a weed, and unfortunately eventually had to be removed. Even though it was planted in the middle of a lawn, the roots stretched over 40 feet away, under a concrete patio to a garden on the other side. Nature can sometimes baffle us with her resiliency - have you ever tried to get rid of ants? When governments encounter an issue, it's not uncommon to overreact and swing the pendulum too far the other way, when all we really need is a better, more sensibly balanced solution. Please consider an option of public access that retains the tram, and allows us the simple pleasure of an open-air ride through the redwoods.

Additional tram issues to consider:

1). The tram mitigates the risk of visitor dehydration and lost visitors. I can't tell you how many times I've seen hikers who were not properly prepared for the hike to the Upper Grove, and weren't sure where they were headed. By eliminating the tram, you will be adding many people to the trails who should not be there. They are going to get to the Upper Grove and suddenly realize that it's getting late, they're cold, they're thirsty b and they've got a long hike back down to the Lower Grove. Are you prepared to be there and assist them?

2). I understand that after removing the tram road, you plan on creating a hardened dirt road from the Lower Grove to an area near the Grizzly Giant, which will accept handicapped (placard) drivers. Do you really prefer these types of drivers over park personnel operating a tram? Some of the placard drivers will absolutely interfere with hikers and other cars. First-timers will stop and gawk at every opportunity. You can plan on addressing a few car accidents per season (hopefully none involving redwoods).

3). The tram is operated by park personnel who know the area, and control the flow of many people between the groves. Park personnel answer questions and can deal with those in need as they work their way through the forest route. In the absence of the tram, are you planning on stationing park personnel at the Grizzly Giant and Upper Grove? By removing the narrative the tram operator provides (and responses to visitor questions), you are not enhancing the tram rider's experience; again, you are eliminating it.

4). If your primary concerns are the trampled trails, then the tram might make a better option. Keeping people on a tram will restrict them from wandering around (either on or off trail).

5). Most non-locals have a limited time window to visit the Grove. They may have time to hike to the Grizzly Giant, but they don't have the time to hike all the way to the Upper Grove and back. The tram provides access to the entire Grove, and gets visitors out of there in a timely fashion (faster turnover).

It's hard to believe that after all of these years you're going to destroy all of this, and prevent others from experiencing the forest the way thousands have enjoyed it. Let's face it - the real purpose of your plan is to further limit and minimize the number of non-locals who will visit the area by making the experience as onerous as possible. You did it by closing the Yosemite Falls parking lot, and now you're doing it here. You are discouraging and discriminating against those who have the same right to appreciate our national park as you do. Locals probably focus on the physical attributes of the park and selfishly view outsiders as threats that must be denied access. But Yosemite is more than just waterfalls, mountains, and trees b it's an international playground that brings humanity together. It's the cultural exchange of meeting people from all over the world, sharing nature, and forming bonds that may be temporary and short-lived, but that are captured permanently through photographs. This national park belongs to the people. All of the people, of all ages, with average physical capabilities. Like it or not, that tram does more to fulfill the human experience than you realize. If the people don't want a tram, they won't ride it. Until then, please keep it running, and keep that John Muir moment alive.

I'm also going to miss that clunky old gift shop. It's just a cool, small building that visitors naturally gravitate to, for more than just gifts. After a hot afternoon on a dusty trail, a cold soft drink works wonders. Does the building really take up that many square feet? Of course not. If generator noise is an issue, then replace the generator with a quieter model (if you've got \$20 million to spend on this project, then you've got the money to replace the generator). Again, you're not removing the gift shop to save the forest, because it's far more resilient than that. Your plan is all about minimizing visitors to the Grove, and getting those who do attend out of the Grove as quickly as possible. Actually, that pretty much summarizes your strategy for the entire park, doesn't it.

Correspondence ID:	105	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 19:47:50				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	[REDACTED]				

Subject: Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft EIS From: [REDACTED]

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide my comments on the Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft EIS. I agree that the NPS preferred Alternative 2 best meets the goals to restore giant sequoia habitat and the

natural processes that are critical to the long-term health of the trees, and to improve the overall experience for visitors to the grove as well as the other goals to protect special status species, enhance sustainability, improve visitor education and way-finding, improve visitor and employee safety, and protect cultural resource values.

I support the elimination of the commercial tram operation and relocation of almost all parking and visitor services to the South Entrance. Provisions need to be made to allow the handicapped continued access to the upper grove. Within Mariposa Grove, the paved road between the lower Grove and upper Grove areas currently used by the commercial tram would be narrowed and maintained as a hardened trail for pedestrian use and limited service vehicle access. Access would also be available for vehicles with accessibility placards to travel to accessible parking spaces at the Grizzly Giant trail head. Service access is needed beyond the Grizzly Giant to maintain communications equipment at Wawona Point, comfort stations, and the upper Grove area leach field. This hardened trail should be able to accommodate those with accessibility placards as well as service vehicles as is presently done on restricted roads in Yosemite Valley. Limited parking can be provided by small turnouts which will also address the problem of oncoming vehicles on a narrow, one-way road.

I think it is important to consider the environmental damage that asphalt and petroleum products cause to the natural ecosystem. Research sustainable pavement alternatives currently available for road and trail repair and consider replacing all asphalt surfaces with context sensitive pavement materials that will limit the visual impacts of trails, paths and roads.

Under Alternative 2, visitor parking and information services would be relocated to the park's South Entrance, which would serve as the primary transit hub and contact area for Grove visitors. This will give visitors a sense of arrival. The South Entrance roundabout would add to that sense of arrival. I feel that the South Entrance roundabout should be considered in the current plans rather than if the proposed kiosk improvements at the South Entrance (to be implemented in 2013) do not adequately address congestion for visitors coming into the South Entrance from Fish Camp. The disruptions caused by the road realignment and parking relocation should be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Plan ahead rather than react when the need arises. I believe the roundabout would provide a means to slow traffic down while realignment of the intersection would reduce risk of collisions, better accommodate larger vehicles, increase the intersection's vehicle traffic capacity, improve clarity of way finding and travel directions for visitors and reduce traffic congestion at the intersection.

I do not support the Alternative 3 suggestion of a Grizzly Giant Hub. This alternative would require a new Grove bypass road as well as two bridges. Even though this new parking area would be outside of the giant sequoia habitat; the number of private cars, recreational vehicles and buses entering and leaving this primary departure point would impact the quiet solitude of the Grove. The shuttle originating at the South Entrance would be available to visitors with limited mobility and I like the idea of parking my car and having the option of hiking or taking a shuttle into the Grove. Again, thank you for allowing me to be involved in the restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias. I appreciate being included in this important project and look forward to receiving updates on its progress.

Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID:	106	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 20:29:36				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	[REDACTED] May 7, 2013				

Don Neubacher, Superintendent Yosemite National Park ATTN: Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Statement P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Don:

I wish to provide further comment on the Mariposa Grove Draft EIS.

Your introductory letter in the Draft EIS begins with history of the Yosemite Grant, an Act of Congress signed into law by President Lincoln on June 30, 1864, but incorrectly states the purpose of the Act was to set aside public lands for the "express purpose of preserving scenic and natural resources." The first paragraph of the Abstract goes further by stating that the areas of the Yosemite Grant "shall be held for public use, resort and recreation b & inalienable for all time."

This stipulation in the Yosemite Grant required the state of California to accept these express conditions. California Governor Frederick Low accepted the Yosemite Grant on September 28, 1864. At the insistence of the Federal Government, the California Legislature acted on April 2, 1866 to ratify the Governor's action to accept the Yosemite Grant. A state law was enacted.

On March 3, 1905, the California Legislature receded and re-granted Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove to the U.S.A. with the same express conditions that the land is "to be held for all time by the United States of America for public use, resort and recreation". The re-grant further stated, "This act shall take effect from and after acceptance by the United States of Americab &"

On June 11, 1906, a Joint Resolution of Congress was passed accepting the recession and re-grant. However, there was no mention of the express conditions in the Joint Resolution. And, a Joint Resolution is not the same as a law enacted by Congress

and signed by the President.

California held the land for 41 years and followed the express conditions that could never change. California properly included the express conditions in the re-grant because it was legally bound to preserve them by obligating the successor owner to accept them.

Now it has been over 100 years since Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove were added to Yosemite National Park, and the NPS has followed the edict that the land was set aside for public use, resort and recreation, until now.

Pages 9 and 10 of Chapter 1 of the DEIS list the "Laws and Policies" used to develop the Alternatives presented in the DEIS. Nowhere is the Yosemite Grant listed.

The Federal Statutes and Executive Orders portion begins with the NPS Organic Act of 1916. The NPS is ignoring the purpose for which the land was removed from the public domain and forever designated for public use, resort and recreation.

If the NPS has recently determined that the U.S.A. did not accept the stipulations in the re-grant because they were not listed in the Joint Resolution of Congress, then why is this not stated in the DEIS. It is unethical and unfair to the public to base current NPS Planning on a questionable interpretation of the law without stating the facts.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments on the Mariposa Grove Draft Environmental Statement.

Sincerely,

██████████ Civil Engineer

Correspondence ID:	107	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 21:58:20				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Mariposa Grove Plan. I am excited to see the park take necessary steps to protect these magnificent trees. Moving the parking lot and hub of operations further away, to the entrance gate seems like a wise step, and a smart sacrifice to preserve the Giant Sequoias, and may even enhance the sense of arrival. I also think that the ADA accessible trails in the lower grove will be a huge improvement to the visitor experience while also protecting the sequoia's fragile root systems. I would like to see the 'bookstore' in the preferred alternative turned into a more full-service gift shop. That seems like an easy change to make which would both preserve some of the visitor services that people find convenient and still not have a negative impact on the grove. I have mixed feelings about the trams leading to the upper grove. On one hand, even with the new headsets that provide some additional measure of quiet compared to a tour that is delivered through loud-speakers, the diesel engines of the trams are an unwelcome intrusion into the peace and sense of majesty that pervades the space in quieter moments. On the other hand, the upper grove is one of my favorite places in the park and being able to share that with my elderly parents, and my young nieces who would not be able to make the hike on their own was a treasured experience that made an impression on them that they didn't have at the lower grove. It would be nice to see some kind of compromise between the two alternatives, maybe allowing trams or tram-like options on the road that will be maintained through the grove anyway as a service road, but requiring quieter engines, to preserve the tranquility for others, or limited hours that would allow those that wish to enjoy the grove in relative quiet to be able to do that before the engines started for the day. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.				

Correspondence ID:	108	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 22:45:17				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	We will attempt to post these comments to the PEPC web site. If that attempt seems problematic, we will e-mail these comments to <yose_planning@nps.gov>. If all else fails, we will attempt to fax them to 209-379-1294.				

These comments on the Draft Mariposa Grove Plan are submitted on behalf of a group of citizens who are tentatively calling themselves "Yosemite Advocates." As our group evolves, we may adopt that name formally, or perhaps we will choose some other name.

We appreciate this opportunity to comment on the Draft Mariposa Grove Plan. We also appreciate the dedication of you and your staff in striving to protect Yosemite and its resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations. And we thank you for your efforts throughout this planning process to keep the public informed in a manner which goes beyond what is legally required. I. We agree that it is desirable to relocate most services and facilities from the Lower Grove to the identified site near the South Entrance, as proposed in Alternative 2. The existence of the present services and facilities in the Lower Grove negatively impacts the visitor experience, and also the Giant Sequoias themselves. Recognizing that there will be impacts wherever the services and facilities are located, the identified site near the South Entrance appears to be acceptable.

II. We also agree that it is desirable to eliminate the existing commercial tram operation, as proposed in Alternative 2. The manner in which the tram is presently operated has an excessive impact on the ambience of the Lower Grove, and also on some

of the life-support systems of the Giant Sequoias.

III. While we agree that the commercial tram operation should be discontinued, we nevertheless feel that there needs to be some provision for the continuation of handicapped access to the Upper Grove. Perhaps this could best be provided by permitting vehicles with a handicapped placard to travel on the service road, as is done on some of the restricted roads in Yosemite Valley. If additional turnouts are needed for the passage of oncoming vehicles on the narrow service road, we feel that it should be possible to find appropriate locations for such turnouts to be provided. There may be some other way of providing handicapped access, but the need for doing so should not be used as an argument for continuation of the present tram operation. The impact of the tram operation is not acceptable, and there has to be a better alternative.

IV. In reviewing the site drawing for the South Entrance, it appears that the roundabout would fit into the site plan so well, and provide for such a smooth flow of traffic, that it should be built as part of the present project. It seems strange that you are proposing that it be put off to some future time. It would surely cost less money in the long run to construct the roundabout now, rather than doing something else, and then having to tear that out and construct the roundabout later. Do it now and get it over with. The disruption from continual construction has become a way of life in Yosemite. Do it now and get it over with so there will be less overall impact from construction, and so the public will have the benefit of the improved traffic circulation. Again, thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Draft Mariposa Grove Plan.

██████████ facilitator, Yosemite Advocates

Correspondence ID:	109	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	I am glad to comment on the Draft EIS for the Mariposa Grove Restoration. I have always treasured my experiences and memories of visiting there. The Mariposa Grove elicits in me the same sense of awe as the fantastic, glaciated granites of the Yosemite. These ancient trees connect us to the past. They are living reminders of both the enduring quality and the fragility of nature's balance, and of our place within it. While some still promote the drive-through-tree experience, the National Park Service needs to promote the ecosystem health that sustains these trees and help the public create stronger understanding and relationships with our environment.				

I have always thought it shameful that this amazing spiritual place, with its connection to the ancient past is bisected by a road. The true nature of the grove cannot be grasped from within a vehicle, and is diminished by their presence; the noise, the smell, the speed.

I feel that Alternative 2, the park's preferred alternative best addresses the purpose and need for this project. Alternatives 1 and 4 do not enhance the health of the grove or the visitor experience, while Alternative 3 creates too many new impacts. The restoration of the grove requires the greatest reduction of developed footprint and removing commercial activity. The goal of this project should be to maximise the restoration of natural ecosystem function and natural visitor experience within and around the Mariposa Grove.

Removing roadways and vehicles from the grove will have the greatest positive impact toward restoring the grove. The South Entrance Hub for visitor parking and orientation seems the most logical, but I wonder if its shape or configuration can be modified to eliminate construction impacts over an existing wetland. Also, can the paved area be broken up to maintain more forest canopy for habitat and shaded parking. Large trees and root wads should be utilized for restoration rather than be hauled to mills or burned.

I find the intersection configuration from Alt. 4, figure 2-14 (DEIS) to be less confusing and require less signing than the traffic circle. I also think that electronic signs should be eliminated, as they are ugly, unnecessary modern contrivance that do not add value to the visitor experience.

Alternative transportation for disabled visitors should be considered to Grizzly Giant, such as ADA compliant shuttles, instead of providing for placarded vehicles and parking. And, while I support the concept of converting roads to trails, conversion of existing roads within a wetland and stream corridor to a raised accessible trail is counter productive to ecological restoration. Instead, a conventional accessible trail could be constructed outside of the wetland to the South or North at less cost and greater restorative effect. Also, roadwork and bridge construction by the Three Sentinels should be avoided, and simpler mitigations explored if needed. Removal of communication equipment at Wawona Point should be prioritized, to allow full road conversion through Mariposa Grove at this time.

I am also disturbed by the prospect of new leach fields or sewer lines in the grove, and wonder if alternatives to conventional or vault toilets have been fully considered.

I would like to see shuttle connections available to Mariposa Grove from North park parking to reduce congestion and road kill. I love the idea of a foot trail access to the grove from the South Entrance, but am concerned about trail work and other human impacts in prime, occupied Fisher habitat. Whereas, removing existing "non historic" trails from the grove may just lead to new trail forming elsewhere. If their impacts can be minimized, those trails may help disperse visitors and provide better opportunities for solitude within the grove. I also think that removing large trees from the forest, as logs, as I saw happening at the upper grove in April is a mistake. The could be applied to the landscape as large woody debris for trail closure, riparian restoration, or general habitat enhancement. Also disturbing, are all the stumps along the outer loop trail, south of the upper grove. Perhaps

managers could be less zealous about felling so-called hazard trees. If it is necessary to remove trees, they should be blasted or shaped to simulate natural mechanisms, and left tall enough (20'-50') to provide snag habitat. Form and function should serve the purpose and need.

This Alternative #2 is good for the Park, but it could do significantly more to restore the natural function and sense of wonder embodied by the Mariposa Grove by:

- Removing the communication equipment from Wawona Point and eliminating the road past Grizzly Giant!
- Pulling back human activity from wetlands and restoring riparian areas to maximum extent.
- Leave trees in new parking areas to provide habitat, shade, percolation, humility.
- Use 30" and larger diameter trees as LWD within the grove and surrounds for restoration.
- Limit private vehicle access to the Lower Grove.
- Provide greater shuttle access from other parts of the Park
- Provide wildlife underpass at wetlands south of Park entrance.

Correspondence ID:	110	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	Dear Don:				

I wish to provide comment on the Mariposa Grove Draft EIS.

Since the Grove is not within the corridor width of the South Fork of the Merced River, I believe that the NPS effort to control Park visitation per the Merced River Plan Settlement Agreement is to do this EIS on the Grove.

After nearly 150 years since the Grove and Yosemite Valley were removed from the public domain and reserved for "public use, resort and recreation, inalienable for all time", now the NPS is violating those express conditions of the Yosemite Grant and limiting the public's access to this unique grove of trees.

When the state of California returned the Grove and Yosemite Valley to the U.S.A., the same express conditions were included in the grant. Therefore the NPS is obligated to continue the 100 plus years of management of Yosemite in accordance with the Yosemite Grant. It has worked fine. From stagecoaches to cars, from horseback riding to riding on a tram, the public's right to access and use this land has been recognized.

I believe the Commercial Tram Service should be retained. It has provided access to those interested in paying the cost and provides on-site multi-language instruction about the Grove. Because of the long history and sheer magnitude of the trees, it is fascinating for tourists from around the world to be able to have this opportunity.

The issue of removing paved roads in the grove to improve infiltration of rainfall and snowmelt is misleading. The majority of the water that the trees have access to is underground water. If it were only rainfall and snowmelt, the trees would not have survived all these years.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments on the Mariposa Grove Draft Environmental Statement.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID:	111	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	Apr,22,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	Dear Mr. Neubacher:				

On April 12, 2013 I attended the "Public Input" meeting at the Tenaya Lodge for the Mariposa Grove Restoration Plan. As you know, it was well attended, and many people wanted to speak. I attend these meetings to gather information, and hear public comment, not to socialize. I can understand some time before the meeting for people to review your charts, and what will be covered. A half an hour is more than enough time to do this. You started your presentation late, and it took up more than the twenty minutes that you said it would take. During the presentation, several people wanted to ask questions, which you allowed, but then asked people to hold their questions until the end of the presentation. This showed a lack of organization on your part.

Also, there was no PA system, so it was difficult to hear from the back of the room. The screen was too low, so people towards the back couldn't see either.

When it came time for public questions and comments, there were many people who wanted to share their thoughts, but you did not allow everyone to speak. At 3:30 you shut it down, and said you would be available to answer questions. There were still at least 6 - 8 people with their hands up waiting their turn. I had a question to ask as well, and was disappointed that I was not able to do so. It seemed as though you didn't really want to hear what we had to say, and it felt like censorship. Cutting off time for the public to be heard for a "social" hour is NOT public involvement. You should have used the last half hour for public input. I drove quite a ways to attend this meeting, and was very disappointed in the way it was run.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID:	112	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,06,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Fax				
Correspondence:	Superintendent,				

Your good intentions in trying to preserve the Mariposa Grove are appreciated, but you are eliminating the opportunities of many peoples to experience this phenomenal grove. The fact that many in our society cannot walk to the top due to altitude, health, age or any other reason should not exclude them from this grove. Yes, the bottom part of the grove is outstandingly beautiful, but the upper portion should be seen also.

Our world is not the same as in the 1800's when the park was established. We are all aware the population has greatly increased. I'm sure each of us could go on and on with changes in our existing world. But, we cannot return to the times of John Muir.

As we a people, adapt to all these changes, we must not eliminate any groups from this amazing place. I'm confident that those of you sho are planning the preservation of this grove could adapt changes for the benefit of the park and also the people.

If people are part of the environment (view these trees), they are more likely to care about the environment. If this opportunity is not available, an appreciation will likely not grow.

Perhaps a narrower tram could be used instead of the wide ones that now exist. The tram & route could be adjusted. The greatest trees could be fenced to eliminate the many footsteps and wheels at their base. With all the resources available, I feel confident the park planners could find an improved way to get water to these trees and still allow visitors access to visit them.

Parking is a major issue. The existing lots have been there for many years. Removing them or making them smaller is a definite slap-in-the-face to our Citizens.

The National Park is for each of us; not just the physically fit, the elite, or the National Park employees. Our society needs to be a part of this phenomenal place.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID:	113	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,08,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Fax				
Correspondence:	I like Alternative 4 because it retains the option of a tram. Do not like Alternative 3 - would be too intrusive on the Grizzly Giant, our favorite tree.				

If the museum function in the Upper Grove is moved to the lower Grove or South Gate, I suggest using the building as an overnight skihut for cross-country skiers.

Correspondence ID:	114	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,07,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Fax				
Correspondence:	Dear Superintendent Neubacher:				

The Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau (Bureau) serves as the primary tourism agency for the greater Yosemite region and believes strongly in preserving and strengthening the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias (Grove). The Bureau has reviewed the Mariposa Grove Restoration Plan (Plan) and appreciates the thoughtful and thorough approach taken by the National Park Service (NPS) in developing its alternatives.

Clearly, retaining the valuable and proven visitor experience in the Grove is of utmost importance for the Bureau, as it is the visitors who come to witness and enjoy the natural wonder of the area and provide economic benefits for the communities and residents surrounding Yosemite National Park (Park). The Bureau is convinced the Plan does a very good job of laying out

restorative options for the Grove that will be of tremendous long-term value. By lessening the impact of infrastructure and traffic, the Plan will improve the visitor experience and provide for generations of enjoyment.

The Bureau summarizes its comments into three areas: recommending Alternative 4 as the Preferred Alternative; location of the gift and food services facility (Shop) at the South Entrance Hub; and concerns about the Plan's review of impacts to the overall visitor experience. These comments are discussed in more detail below.

Accessibility Makes Alternative 4 a Better Preferred Alternative In the Plan, the NPS has selected Alternative 2 as the Preferred Alternative. While this option is reasonable, there are factors that make Alternative 4 a sounder alternative, particularly with respect to the access benefits provided to the Grove's visitors.

In the Bureau's analysis of the Plan, we also hold the protection and restoration of the Grove as the highest priority, as a vibrant Grove will continue to serve as a tremendous attraction for the thousands of visitors each year. Key to the visitor experience, however, is access to the Grove, which is better provided under Alternative 4, particularly for those individuals with disabilities or other mobility limitations.

Alternative 4 would provide for the tram service through the Grove which, given the steep and hilly terrain, is of tremendous benefit for visitors, including older visitors, children and others who could not otherwise be able to fully enjoy the area due to physical limitations. The benefits of the tram service complement other parts of the Plan that describe accessibility improvements in the Grove, including trails, restrooms and other facilities, and parking.

The tram service also is a perfect amenity for increasing the diversity of visitors to the Grove, as its various interpretive services provide a visitor experience for individuals from varying backgrounds. By providing educational and interpretive information in multiple languages, and tailored for children and adults, the trams combine access with information in a manner not available elsewhere.

South Entrance Hub Location for Gift and Food Services For years, the Shop has served as an important resource for visitors at the Grove. In both Alternative 2 and Alternative 4, it is roughly implied the Shop will be relocated. The Bureau believes the relocation of the Shop to the South Entrance Hub should be explicitly recommended in both alternatives.

Data provided in the Plan highlights the fact that approximately 25 percent of the millions of visitors to the Park each year visit the Grove. Given the high percentage cited in the Plan of these visitors who are making their first trip to the Park, it is clear the services and products offered at the Shop are of tremendous appeal. Besides just the gifts and informational products available at the Shop, for many visitors - especially those traveling with children - the ability to procure snacks and beverages in the relatively remote Grove area is also extremely valuable.

The Bureau agrees the current location of the Shop in the environmentally-sensitive heart of the Grove is not consistent with the overall goals of the Plan and its stakeholders. It's important that visitor services are available in accessible locations - particularly in the Grove - due to the isolation from other Park facilities.

Consideration of the Overall Visitor Experience As the Bureau has recently considered not only this Plan, but also the NPS' plans for the Tuolumne and Merced Rivers, it appears that a bias exists against the majority of traditional visitors to the Park. Most visitors to the Park - particularly those coming from outside California and the United States - are drawn by the variety of visitor experiences, ranging from secluded hikes to river rafting, bicycling, horseback riding, and interpretative tram tours to name a few.

Comprehensive as these plans are, they have not examined the impacts to the Park and local communities of abandoning many of the traditional visitor experiences that have been a part of the "Yosemite Experience" for generations. As the Bureau has noted, it is in complete agreement with the NPS with regard to ensuring the natural beauty and wonder of the Park are preserved for the generations yet to come. However, the Bureau does not agree this effort should be at the exclusion of services and activities that enhance the visitor experience and have no adverse impact on the environment. Without the retention of services such as the tram and Shop at the Grove - and other visitor activities in other parts of the Park - the Bureau believes significant negative impacts to Park and regional visitation and economies will occur.

The Bureau stands with the NPS in its goal of restoration and protection of the fabulous Grove and will continue to work as a partner to ensure its natural wonder will be available to future generations. The Bureau believes Alternative 4, with the addition of the Shop at the South Entrance, represents the best route forward. Incorporating this in the final plan will both protect the Grove and ensure visitor access to its beauty. Above all, this alternative provides for interpretation and education about the Grove as a natural resource, including respect for our natural treasures and continued environmental stewardship.

Yours truly,

██████ Executive Director Yosemite/Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

Correspondence ID:	115 - 329	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:					

Correspondence Type: Form Letter, Received from 214 separate individuals
Correspondence: National Park Service

Dear Service,

Giant Sequoias are majestic and beautiful trees that deserve our protection and every effort to restore them. The Mariposa Grove is home to the largest Giant Sequoias in Yosemite National Park.

I thank the National Park Service for your efforts in the Mariposa Restoration plan to relocate facilities that impact the Giant Sequoias, build new trails, redesign parking lots, and enhance accessibility.

Specifically, I support the Preferred Alternative 2, removing most development from Mariposa Grove and relocating the visitor services and parking to the South Entrance. The Preferred Alternative protects and improves the environment in the Park and especially the giant sequoia groves. I especially support removal of the Tram Service, which will improve and protect the natural grove, allow for a more natural experience in the Sequoias, and reduce air pollution. I also applaud the relocation of most parking from the Grove to the South Entrance Hub, and the provision for accessible pathways in some parts of the grove. I encourage the Park Service to maximize protection of the Pacific Fisher's den habitat. Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 330 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,01,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: My Mariposa Grove Comments for the EIS & Preferred Alternative May 1, 2013

I attended the meeting held at the Tenaya Lodge on April 12, 2013 and have read the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

dated February 2013 and here are my comments regarding the preferred alternative of the Mariposa Grove Plan:

1. I am in favor of the realignment of the Grove Road to eliminate the curve at the entrance which currently goes through the three Sentinels.
2. I am in favor of renewal of the Wawona Point area.
3. I am in favor of converting the south portion of the upper Grove loop road to a hiking trail; but I want all of the other trails in the Upper Grove to stay.
4. I am very much AGAINST the removal of ALL public parking in the Grove during the summer months. The public should have access to the Grove before and after the shuttles run during the season. I as a hiker want to be able to start earlier so I can finish before heat of day. Surely, the Park Service can put in 25-50 parking spaces for this purpose! Please, please find a way to do this.
5. I am very much AGAINST the designated bus parking spaces at Wawona. If more bus parking is needed, put it elsewhere. Please consider putting them at the Snow Play area or Tenaya Hotel or the old Fish Camp Gas station area or ANYPLACE between the South Entrance and Fish Camp. Leave the Wawona parking for the History Center, the picnic area users, the store and ice machine users, etc.
6. I am AGAINST a hiking trail from the South Entrance to the picnic area and on to the Lower Grove because I think it is a waste of money. Who would want to hike another four miles (2 mi. each way) on a south-facing slope TO GET TO the Grove rather than spend that time & energy hiking IN the Grove & I think the number would be extremely low.

7. I am concerned about the reduction of shuttle service from Wawona. When someone needs the shuttle to return, how long of a wait will they have at the Grove? Since the EIS is so vague about the service, it is hard to comment. I would not want to take the shuttle, hike in the Grove, and then have to wait a long time for a shuttle returning to Wawona. This would cause me to drive to the South Entrance & take up one of those parking spaces rather than the shuttle from Wawona.

8. Whatever shuttles there are from Wawona, they should fill-up remaining spaces on the shuttle at the South Entrance and then continue to the Grove. I am AGAINST having passengers from Wawona having to get off at the South Entrance and wait for another shuttle to take them from the South Entrance to the Grove.

9. Shuttle bus service should start much earlier than in the past (sunrise) and continue later than in the past. (sunset)

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 331 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,07,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: [REDACTED]

May 7, 2013

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park Attn: Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Statement P. O. Box 577 Yosemite, California 95389

Dear Superintendent Neubacher and Mariposa Grove Planning Team:

Please accept these comments as my response to the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Mariposa Grove DEIS).

As I mentioned in my comments on the Tuolumne River Plan (TRP) and the Merced River Plan (MRP) draft documents, I ask again how the 1980 Yosemite General Management Plan (GMP) after more than 30 years can still have relevance in the present planning discussion? Both the TRP and MRP state that amendments will be made to the GMP but what those amendments will be is unknown. How can I have a proper understanding of the proposed management actions for the Mariposa Grove without knowing how the GMP is going to be amended?

It appears that a primary issue for the Mariposa Grove management area is the current 115 space parking lot and alleged difficulties associated with the parking of private vehicles at Wawona and at the South Entrance. The National Park Service's preferred alternative is to consolidate private vehicle parking at a new parking lot to be constructed next to the South Entrance. How does consolidation address crowding at this new facility and within the Grove itself?

Why is the current Mariposa Grove visitor parking pattern, which is characterized as "fragmented" in the Mariposa Grove DEIS, considered a negative approach to vehicle management? Does not the NPS in the MRP propose "fragmented" parking by constructing satellite parking facilities at the west end of Yosemite Valley and at El Portal? Considering the diversity of the origination of visitors to the Mariposa Grove would not dispersed parking lots be a more effective approach to traffic management? Both the TRP and the MRP propose a network of large parking lots to intercept visitors, why is this theme not carried forward in the Mariposa Grove planning discussion?

Under the No Action Alternative, I believe RV spaces (i.e. parking spaces for oversized recreational vehicles) is stated as less than 5. Is this at the existing 115 space lot at the Mark Thornton response to the Mariposa Grove DEIS lower Grove area or does this include parking at the South Entrance and at Wawona?

Under the action alternatives it is proposed to increase RV parking to around 30 spaces. Please define what RV or oversized spaces are in relation to physical area impacted. Why the proposed increases?

It is stated that the current fragmented parking causes "backtracking." What is backtracking? How was this identified as a problem? Would this problem not also plague the proposed transit plans that the NPS wants to implement Park-wide, i.e. YARTS?

The preferred alternative proposed construction of a transportation hub at the South Entrance. How does this relate to the transit schemes found in the MRP? Where is the Park-wide transportation plan? If the "hub" is a part of a larger transit scheme, should cumulative impacts be addressed?

Why are the solutions for addressing problems associated with the commercial tram and the gift store linked with the removal (or reduction in size and use) of the existing lower Grove parking lot? What percentage of soundscape impacts are associated with the commercial tram versus the gift store generator versus the parking lot at the lower Grove?

Why not clarify that the public does not have to choose between the alternatives but can propose a hybrid alternative?

The phrase "no action" is confusing as the NPS has taken and will take actions that affect access to the Mariposa Grove and facilities within the planning area to keep in compliance with various State and Federal laws (e.g. health and safety, historic preservation, etc.). So why not clarify what "no action" really means?

What percentage of wetland restoration would not be accomplished if the existing 115 space parking lot was not removed? What is this percentage related to? If climate change equates to a drying weather pattern, what is the likelihood that the wetlands are going to disappear anyway? What percentage of wetland loss is due to the absence of a frequent fire regime? What effect would the complete elimination of leaking water lines have on Grove health and on wetland areas?

What are "appropriately placarded" vehicles? Is there a difference between these and vehicles with accessibility placards? How is accessibility defined?

The NPS has dismissed the idea of a "Lower Grove Area Hub" but what percentage of developed footprint is being removed under Alternative 2? The preferred alternative includes bus parking, accessibility parking and apparently 50 seasonal parking spaces by the lower Grove area. Isn't this a type of a lower Grove area hub?

If the NPS consolidates all parking at a new parking lot near the South Entrance, what is to keep people from parking at Wawona or elsewhere and riding a bus to the Mariposa Grove location? How do you accommodate the additional visitors from other parking lots?

Regarding the communications facility at Wawona Point, is the facility only for Park administration or does it serve for other wireless uses? What did the NPS do for radio communications in the previous 50 years? Why is it now considered a critical link? Since the facility has been "recently" installed is this not an example of what can take place under the so-called "No Action Alternative?" Can a larger fuel storage tank be installed to reduce the number of fueling trips?

The NPS listed several reasons for dismissing from further consideration the construction of parking facilities and visitor contact centers on adjacent Forest Service land or at the Goat Meadow recreational area. Are these concerns, in general terms, not amplified by the proposals found in the TRP and MRP (which failed to note these issues)?

Considering the impacts on visitation to the Tuolumne Grove when the NPS cut-off private vehicle access should that experience not have been disclosed in the Mariposa Grove DEIS? The NPS is to tailor their plans around protecting visitor experience. How does funneling Mariposa Grove visitors to a single parking lot by the South Entrance and funneling people into a shuttle bus not degrade visitor experience? How does adding an estimated two miles (about four miles round trip) for hikers (as proposed under Alternative 2) not pose quality of experience and health risks to visitors?

The cost analysis is vague and may be underestimating long term expenses. A few specific questions are offered. What is the total capital costs for Alternative 2? Is it \$20,711,000.00 or is it \$26,711,000.00? The notes for Table 2-1 are confusing and unclear. Commercial tram costs should not have been deleted from the cost analysis as this does have a bearing on contract costs. What influence did the source for the funding of the proposed improvements in the Mariposa Grove have on the planning process?

Regarding the shooting range, why can't this facility be closed and rangers trained at nearby county facilities? How many rangers carry guns? Why do rangers need guns?

Could the large commercial tram be replaced with smaller less intrusive and more fuel efficient vehicles? Shouldn't this have been addressed rather than simply eliminating this amenity? Couldn't emerging technologies replace the outdated PA system-based interpretative program now being used?

Why a projected increase in tour buses under the action alternatives when the TRP and MRP do not project an increase in tour bus entries?

Where is the evidence that the shuttle buses will have a lower impact on air quality when the lower Grove parking area is reconfigured?

Where is the discussion about the weight impact on roadways of shuttle buses and tour buses versus private passenger vehicles?

Where is the discussion on the fact that buses can bring more people per hour to the Mariposa Grove than private passenger vehicles?

Where is the discussion on disbursed visitor arrival via private passenger vehicle versus concentrated visitor arrival via tour or shuttle bus? Bus passengers disgorge at one time at one location cars carry far fewer people and arrive and depart across a greater timeframe than buses.

To what extent (in percentages) has the Grove's health been compromised by the absence of fire versus impacted by people trampling the area? To what degree has air quality and air emissions impacts from external to the Park affected the Grove's health?

What is the significance of a fire return interval departure (FRID) rating of 4? What are the scale parameters? What benefits can be achieved from forest fire smoke emissions?

Where is the evidence to substantiate the claim that replacing private passenger vehicle traffic with shuttle bus traffic on the access road from the South Entrance to the lower Grove would "substantially reduce vehicle emissions?" One fully loaded shuttle bus may displace about 15 cars (theoretically) but how many vehicles add up to the same emission and carbon footprint of one bus? Who decided that cars are bad and buses are good? What is the evidence to support that position? If buses and other large vehicles were prohibited from using the Mariposa Grove Road would the proposed "major realignment" be necessary?

How does visitor "typologies" differ from visitor demographics? What is the socioeconomic impact of eliminating private vehicle access to the lower Grove parking area? How does this potentially impact the overall tourism market?

I offer the following closing statements as a reprise to my previous observations and concerns:

I oppose the preferred alternative because the goals of protecting visitor experience and resource protection will not be met. To summarize, it seems to me that rather than reducing crowding within the Mariposa Grove, Alternative 2 will exacerbate the problem by concentrating visitor arrivals and departures around bus access schedules rather than the alternative pattern of dispersed location and time entry associated with private passenger vehicle based access. Where once a significant number of people were arriving to and departing from the lower Grove parking area via private passenger vehicle in groups of four or less, the preferred alternative will be delivering most visitors to the lower Grove via a shuttle bus system that will disgorge passengers in groups up to 45 people per arrival. This "platooning" of people movement will be carried out well into the trail system and will be further reinforced by the need of visitors to return to the bus loading area at or near the time of scheduled departures.

I also suspect that the operation and maintenance costs stated in the Mariposa Grove DEIS for the expanded shuttle bus system are grossly understated, and fail to adequately take into account labor costs, and increased infrastructure repair and replacement costs associated with the use of heavy vehicles. Air quality and noise associated with bus traffic appear understated. The projected increase in tour bus activity seems to contradict NPS projections for this visitor group as reported in the TRP and MRP. There is no adopted integrated Park-wide transportation plan. And, there is no justification to increase accommodating oversized recreational vehicles.

Without clarity on the need of the recently installed communication facility and the lack of clarity on why the shooting range can't be closed, I see these as unanswered questions. Supporting the "No Action Alternative" does not mean abandoning common sense when it comes to routine maintenance so I challenge the deferred maintenance cost estimates.

The TRP and the MRP do discuss user-capacity, albeit with only a selective approach to the Federal Register's definition. However, the Mariposa Grove DEIS does an even poorer job in addressing this topic. While viewpoint saturation and critical mass crowding on the trails, particularly at the Grizzly Giant location, are discussed, the real issue is total capacity. If the current private vehicle access system is pushing crowding within the Mariposa Grove to unacceptable limits, the bus plan surely will make matters worse. Why was this not more fully analyzed in the Mariposa Grove DEIS?

The proposed language changes to the GMP regarding private vehicle access has been left ambiguous and unclear. Nevertheless, both the Park Superintendent and the MRP claim that the GMP goal of eliminating private vehicle access has been deleted from current Park policy. Why is this change in policy not reflected in the Mariposa Grove DEIS?

In closing, I request that the NPS postpone a Record of Decision regarding the Mariposa Grove plan until the MRP has been adopted and the amendments to the GMP made public. When those actions have been accomplished, the NPS should release an addendum to the draft Mariposa Grove plan indicating how those actions will affect or not affect the various alternatives outlined in the draft Mariposa Grove DEIS.

Sincerely, electronically mailed [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 332 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: Apr,30,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Overall, I support your Preferred, Alternative 2, with some additions. With reduction of the existing roadbed footprint, (except for a few passing spots) a continuation of the tram service is essential for many visitors to have any access to the Upper Grove, a great pity. I would like to see the tram facilities included in the final development at the South Entrance. Also, relevant to tram service, why not a 1/2 fare available to people, otherwise unable to make the full climb up to the Upper Grove, but could descend walking?? Also, at the South Entrance, should financing allow, a roundabout would be a great improvement to the plans. To alleviate water and sewage issues, why not eliminate flush toilets altogether in the entire project?

Correspondence ID: 333 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,07,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: May 7, 2013

Mr. Don Neubacher, Superintendent Yosemite National Park

Comments to Mariposa Grove Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

As stated in our response to the Merced River Plan, the Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau is tasked with representing the many visitors that enter through our gateway. The Highway 41 gateway, the most traveled entrance to Yosemite, is home to many of the services that are required or requested by travelers to the park. The bureau advocates for these visitors while being cognizant of our responsibility to help protect the park resources. The balance between resource protection and visitor use and access is difficult to find. Unfortunately, with the two previous plans and including the Mariposa Grove plan, there is an obvious trend to eliminate a large group of potential visitors. This is unacceptable.

It seems that with every plan that is put forth, a certain segment of society is excluded. In the Mariposa Grove Plan, it is obvious if you are not physically fit or a parent with young children you will be denied the opportunity to see the grove as in the past.

In the preferred alternative, removal of the trams will require everyone that does not have a handicap placard to hike distances to view the Sequoias. Last year according to grove staff approximately 80,000 visitors rode the trams and enjoyed the experience. The trams offer the foreign visitor the opportunity to have a translated narration rather than simply hiking around and trying to comprehend the significance of the beautiful trees. The trams offer the visitor, unable to hike, the opportunity to see most of the grove, including the Grizzly Giant and the fallen Tunnel Tree. There is ample opportunity for solitude on the many trails leading away from the tram routes. The bureau supports keeping the trams in service as in the past.

The bureau supports adding the parking area at South Entrance. However, this should be additional to the existing parking in the lower grove. Shuttles can ferry visitors from the south entrance to the lower grove as in the past without the obvious traffic congestion in Wawona and the necessity of vehicles going back and forth from South Entrance.

The preferred alternative addresses the ability of visitors to access the grove during the off season. This description is difficult to understand and seems contradictory. On page 2-11, the plan states that "during the shoulder seasons, when the shuttles are no longer running, only placarded vehicles would be provided access to the lower Grove area and Grizzly Giant". In the summary table on page 2-43, one box says that shuttle access will be expanded to include shoulder seasons (May through November). The box below says that shuttles will operate March through October. This begs the question: what is the schedule? What is the definition of shoulder season? What happens the rest of the year when, like this past winter, the grove road was open almost year round? It seems that keeping the upper grove parking would eliminate any need to operate shuttles during the off season except during holidays. Again we address the plan's inability to provide the best access to all visitors.

In summary, the bureau cannot stress enough that the plan, simply put, says that unless you are capable of hiking, you don't deserve the opportunity to see the majority of the Mariposa Grove. The population is aging, and with that more people will be unable to enjoy what rightly belongs to them.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

██████████ President ██████████ Executive Director Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau Board of Directors

Correspondence ID: 334 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,13,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on The Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Study. We write in support of the plan's Environmentally Preferred Alternative Two and offer comments for improvements.

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), established in 1919, now represents more than 750,000 members and supporters across the country as we uphold our mission: to protect and enhance America's national parks for present and future generations. NPCA, as you know, has been involved in issues that affect Yosemite National Park for many years.

The National Parks Conservation Association supports Alternative 2, South Entrance Hub, because it would remove infrastructure and services that are currently damaging the unique resources. We support the relocation of infrastructure and services, placing them in less sensitive places, including most public parking, the gift shop, the concessioner-operated commercial tram staging area and tram operations that would be removed from Mariposa Grove to allow for restoration of wetlands, soundscapes, and giant sequoia habitat in Mariposa Grove. Impervious surfaces within the Grove would be minimized, and all areas from which buildings or pavement would be removed, and that are not slated for reuse, would be ecologically restored to enhance sequoia habitat. Following demolition and removal activities, ecological restoration measures would include soil preparation (e.g., decompaction), surface contouring to match local topography, and planting site-appropriate native vegetation. Visitor parking and information services would be relocated to the park's South Entrance, which would serve as the primary transit hub and contact area for Grove visitors. NPCA also recognizes that expanded parking at the South Entrance would offset the loss of present parking at the Lower Grove and would accommodate some overflow parking and that the free shuttle would operate from the South Entrance to the Lower Grove.

In addition to our general support of Alternative 2, we offer the following comments regarding access as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA):

NPCA encourages Yosemite to study possible actions that would provide non-polluting, emission free access for those with disabilities who will no longer be able to access the Upper Grove via tram if this alternative is implemented. We are concerned that removing the access that is currently available will reduce some visitors' ability to experience the resources.

The National Parks Conservation Association commends Yosemite National Park on producing a plan that will provide such strong protection and restoration of the world-class resources at Mariposa Grove.

Sincerely, [REDACTED] Central Valley Program Manager National Parks Conservation Association

Correspondence ID:	335	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,08,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	SCH#: 2013034001				

Dear Lisa Acree:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Draft EIS to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on May 7, 2013, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] Director, State Clearinghouse

Correspondence ID:	336	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,03,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	Dear Mr. Neubacher,				

I'm writing regarding the plans for the Mariposa grove. I've looked over the hard copy of plans and realize there will always be driving jobs for the grove. I mention that to stress the sincerity of my concerns. I've driven trams in the grove for 14 yrs. I haven't met one person that is for removing the trams by the way.

The importance of Delaware North's large number of employees in the grove has been ignored. Plans to increase parking and help get more pedestrians into the grove, without uniformed employees (NPS or DNC) will be damaging to the trees and natural

beauty. There is not enough N.P.S. coverage in any of the plans to prevent damage to the grove. We are constantly radioing Wawona rangers. Its already a problem getting someone up there to give the guest guidance.

It might be surprising to know some of the things that go on there. Hadicap Autos, some of which actually have handicapped passengers, Drive and park where they please without constant instruction, horses are ridden in on back trails in and around the giants, Dogs are allowed to run Free and chase wildlife, signs are moved or stolen, cones of all kinds are taken, I saw a woman run to her car with a young sequoia in her hands, people jump fences and climb on the trees for a photo, arving on trees, volunteer trails, paint graffiti and more.

I love talking to guest and answering questions, but I'm concerned, when there are many more guest and less authoritative presence we'll get the opposite result of conservation. Its my understanding that natural restoration is the goal.

I hope you can address the matter of visitor management. There never have been enough N.P.S. employees in the grove.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID:	337	Project:	38400	Document:	51911
Received:	May,09,2013 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	Thank you for the opportunity to share my opinions regarding the restoration of the Mariposa Grove. I attended the site visit on October 9th, and came away with a great deal of valuable information. I am happy to agree with the selection of the preferred alternative listed in the DEIS. It is evident that the planners listened to the comments of those who attended the site visit.				

I have two suggestions for consideration, based on the preferred alternative in the plan.

1. I mentioned my concerns with the use of a traffic circle at the intersection to the Mariposa Grove, after the October 9th site visit. I am not a fan of traffic circles, and have witnessed where they can be a hazardous location for pedestrians. I am also concerned that the size of the circle may not easily accommodate larger RVs and buses.

2. I support the removal of the commercial tram. I wonder if there could be an alternative transportation for disabled visitors who would like to visit the upper grove, when weather and road/trail conditions permit. My suggestion would be an electric cart similar to carts used in some airports. I am not sure how this would work with ADA requirements, determining who could ride on the cart, and if an attendant/family member would also be able to accompany the disabled person.

I look forward to enjoying the restored grove in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Correspondence ID: 338 **Project:** 38400 **Document:** 51911
Received: May,03,2013 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Mr. Neubacher:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Project; Yosemite National Park, California. Our review is provided pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The EPA supports the National Park Service's (NPS) commitment to restore giant sequoia habitat, wetlands, and soundscapes through removal of unnecessary infrastructure from within the grove, removal of the commercial tram operation, and re-routing a road out of wetlands. Based on our review of the DEIS, we have rated the Preferred Alternative 2 as "Lack of Objections" (LO) (see enclosed "Summary of Rating Definitions").

We commend the NPS on the DEIS' thorough description of the possible effects of climate change on regional hydrology and overall ecosystem resilience, and discussion of the need for adaptation to climate change. We also recognize the NPS' efforts to prepare for the possible listing of the Pacific fisher, currently a Candidate species, under the Endangered Species Act. EPA recommends that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) include the biological assessment regarding the Pacific fisher that is referenced on page 3-32 of the DEIS, as well as an update on the fisher's listing status and any consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Page 2-18 of the DEIS discusses a potential road realignment that would include relocation of a creek crossing for the purpose of improving safety, controlling erosion, and avoiding giant sequoias. We recommend that, when considering designs for that crossing, preference be given to infrastructure that would also maximize species protection measures, such as connectivity, minimal ground disturbance and fish passage; for example, a bridge that completely spans the creek, or a bottomless arch culvert that maintains the natural stream bottom with sufficient width to avoid constricting the channel during high flow.

We noticed that the list of "cumulative impact projects" in Appendix B includes the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan, but does not include the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Draft Comprehensive Management Plan. We recommend that the NPS consider, if it has not already done so, whether the Tuolumne Plan may also contribute to cumulative impacts relevant to the proposed project.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the FEIS is released, please send one hard copy and one CD to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at [REDACTED] or have your staff contact [REDACTED] the lead reviewer for this project. [REDACTED] can be reached at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]
