



Restoration of the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias Draft Environmental Impact Statement



The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, the largest of three relict groves within Yosemite National Park, contains approximately 500 giant sequoia trees. Giant sequoias are an iconic species, being among the rarest, oldest and largest living organisms in the world. The big trees so inspired early visitors that in 1864, in the midst of the Civil War, Congress passed landmark legislation to permanently preserve both the Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley “for public use, resort, and recreation” and were the first federally protected scenic areas in the country.

Project Goals

The Mariposa Grove Restoration project aims to restore dynamic ecological processes and increase the resiliency of this treasured grove to withstand emerging stressors today and in the future, such as climate change and altered fire regimes. The last 150 years of human intervention in the Grove has been brief in comparison to the lifespan of the giants, but during this time, we have had a profound impact on their vitality. Likewise, the time frame for the restoration project is relatively brief, but it too can have a profound impact – this time, in catalyzing regeneration and enhancing the resiliency of the ecosystem for a sustainable future. This project fulfills the commitment identified in the park’s 1980 General Management Plan to protect the Giant Sequoias and enhance visitor experience by developing a comprehensive design for the South Entrance and Mariposa Grove that addresses resource protection and improving the visitor experience.

The Plan

In partnership with the Yosemite Conservancy, Yosemite National Park began design development including preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) in 2010 to restore giant sequoia habitat within the Mariposa Grove. Restoration efforts would coincide with the Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley's sesquicentennial anniversary in 2014 as well as the National Park Service's centennial anniversary in 2016.

The Mariposa Grove DEIS presents and analyzes four alternatives, including a No Action Alternative. The park identified Alternative 2 (South Entrance Hub) as the Preferred Alternative. This alternative would restore giant sequoia habitat by removing the parking lot in the lower grove, the gift shop, and the commercial tram operation; and re-route a road out of a wetland in the lower grove area. This alternative also enhances protection for a special status species, the Pacific fisher, which is affected by traffic in the vicinity. The preferred alternative would also reduce traffic congestion and improve the visitor experience by establishing a new parking and transportation hub near the South Entrance station that includes a visitor contact area with information and orientation to the grove. Visitors would park and travel the two miles to the grove by shuttle bus or hike on a new trail. Accessible pathways would be constructed within the lower grove and Grizzly Giant areas, and would include new signs and displays to interpret the story of the giant sequoias.

Tell Us What You Think

For a copy of the plan and a complete description of the alternatives, please visit the park's website at (<http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/mgrove.htm>). Comments can be submitted on the Planning Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/mariposagrove>. Comments made through the PEPC website are the preferred method of submission. Comments can also be sent via email to yose_planning@nps.gov or via U.S. mail to:

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