



Restoration Planning for the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River

“Any way we can lesson our footprint on this fragile and wonderful piece of the Sierra and Yosemite National Park, the better.” -2008 Planning Workbook Comment

Historic and current land management practices have resulted in localized effects on meadows and riparian areas in both Tuolumne Meadows and designated Wilderness upstream and downstream. Regardless of which management alternative is chosen, the following suite of restoration actions will be completed to address these effects, as outlined in Appendix H of the Tuolumne River Plan, *Ecological Restoration Planning for the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan*.

Eliminate Roadside Parking and Associated Informal Trails

To discourage the creation of more informal trails, roadside parking will be eliminated along Tioga Road and the road to Tuolumne Meadows Lodge by installing curbing or naturalistic barriers and by directing visitors to formal parking areas and trailheads. Restoration actions will include decompacting soils, re-contouring unnatural landforms, and re-vegetation (through seeding and transplanting with native seeds/plants), all of which will contribute to the establishment of more natural conditions in the meadows.

Remove Structures Inappropriately Sited Near the Riverbank or in Wet Areas

The following facilities that are inappropriately sited near the riverbank or in wetlands will be removed or relocated under all alternatives:

- Concessioner employee housing in a wet area behind the store and grill
- Concessioner employee tents nearest the river at the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge
- Three visitor tent cabins near the river at the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge
- The A-loop campsites closest to the river
- Abandoned utility lines will be removed, crushed, filled, or plugged to prevent their altering underground water transport.

Restore Riparian Vegetation along Riverbanks

Channel widening is believed to be associated with loss of riparian vegetation along riverbanks. The primary action to address channel widening will be the reestablishment of this riparian vegetation, which will be accomplished by the following activities:

- Establish willows (using hydrodrilling techniques) along riverbanks.
- Apply brush-layering techniques to stabilize riverbanks, promote sediment accretion, and minimize further riverbank loss.
- Protect impacted riverbanks from further trampling by temporary fencing or other deterrents so that vegetation can establish.
- Install temporary exclosures to protect willow regeneration from deer browsing.
- Decompect, seed, mulch, and plant to encourage vegetation establishment on denuded riverbanks.

Mitigate Effects of Tioga Road Culverts

To enhance meadows and hydrologic function, culverts along Tioga Road will be improved to facilitate water flow to the river and adjacent meadows. Existing culverts will be repaired or replaced with larger, better placed culverts.

Culverts will be aligned with the surface level of the adjacent meadows to minimize ponding, clogging and erosive processes such as downcutting and headcutting that result in a lowered water table.

Mitigate Effects of the Great Sierra Wagon Road

The hydrologic effects of the sections of the historic Great Sierra Wagon Road from Tuolumne Meadows Lodge to Lemberg Dome; from Lemberg Dome to Parson's Lodge; and from Parson's Lodge to the Visitor Contact Station will be mitigated through a suite of restoration actions including, but not limited to:

- Improving and adding new culverts, filling in ruts, removing non-native fill and realigning the trail
 - Stabilizing headcuts
 - Reestablishing native vegetation
 - Installing boardwalks or other surfacing to maintain sheetflow and protect native vegetation from trampling.
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Mitigate Impacts from Stock Use in Lyell Canyon

Actions to mitigate stock-related impacts in Lyell Canyon will vary by alternative and involve either eliminating all commercial and some administrative stock use, or increasing its regulation. Localized areas previously disturbed by stock use or other human activities in Lyell Canyon will be restored using techniques that meet the minimum-requirement criteria established under the Wilderness Act. All alternatives call for the following regulation of stock use:

- Campsites and access routes will be specified. Factors such as avoidance of rare plants and other resources of special concern will be considered in designating these areas.
 - Pack stock opening dates (or "range readiness" dates for mountain meadows) will be set by managers.
 - A grazing capacity for meadows in the Lyell Fork has been identified based on recent meadow condition assessments and past research.
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Conduct Additional Research

More research is necessary to determine the historic vegetation communities in areas of concern, the most efficient and effective techniques for restoration, and the feasibility and appropriateness of potential ecological restoration activities. Research might also provide information on the relationship between past land uses, such as intensive sheep grazing, and the rate and extent of conifer seedling establishment. All of these studies will address the potential influence of climatic conditions and consider those interactions.

How to stay involved

Learn more about this plan, including open house dates and other information on the Tuolumne River Plan website at www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/trp.htm. You can also follow this and other park plans on Facebook at www.facebook.com/YosemiteNPS.

Comment on this draft comprehensive management plan and environmental impact statement by visiting the Tuolumne River Plan Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/trp_deis. Electronic comment submittal through PEPC saves resources and allows for the direct entry into the NPS comment analysis system. Alternatively, your comments can be emailed to yose_planning@nps.gov, faxed to 209/379-1294 or mailed to:

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