



## Merced River Plan Preliminary Alternative Concepts

In 1987, Congress determined the Merced River was a remarkable river worthy of designation as a wild and scenic river. This designation recognizes the natural character, free-flowing conditions, and unique features of the river; provides an additional layer of legal protection; and requires a management plan to protect and enhance river values.

### What are the goals of the Merced River Plan?

The overall goal of the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan is to protect and enhance the values for which the Merced River was designated wild and scenic, leaving the river unimpaired for future generations. More specifically, the goals for the Merced River Plan are:

- To promote the river's ability to shape the landscape by reducing impediments to free flow, enabling geologic and hydrologic processes, restoring floodplains and meadows, and protecting water quality.
- To support opportunities for people to continue culturally significant practices directly

related to the river and its unique values.

- To institute a visitor-use management program that balances high-quality public use that is resource based in the river corridor with the protection and enhancement of river values.
- Provide clear direction on administrative land uses and developments in the river corridor, allowing for appropriate structures to support the protection of river values.

The National Park Service is developing, in consultation with tribes and participation from stakeholders, a comprehensive management plan to guide the care and protection of the Merced River for the next 15 to 20 years.

### What will the plan do?

The Merced River Plan will guide the future management of Yosemite within the Merced River corridor. The plan will guide future decisions about land use, such as restoration, transportation, camping, parking, lodging, employee housing, and other administrative uses, and will set user capacity--most notably within Yosemite Valley. In addition, the plan will establish the management

strategy for the next 20 years by modifying the General Management Plan. Through the planning process, the public has provided feedback to improve the visitor experience, such as camping availability and boating access. We address these opportunities where appropriate and feasible in preliminary alternative concepts to be presented in spring 2012.

Where are we in the planning process?

The National Park Service seeks to employ a robust public involvement process for the Merced River Plan. In spring 2011, we shared what we were learning about the condition of the river and its Outstandingly Remarkable Values through public workshops that focused on science related to user capacity and transportation. The NPS also shared a Draft River Values Baseline Condition Report. Beginning in summer 2011, a series of management considerations was published in the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Planning Workbook* to gather public feedback on both site-specific and programmatic management actions. More than 600 print copies of the workbook were dis-

tributed, partly through five public meetings and one webinar. The park received 245 individual correspondences in response to this fall 2011 outreach effort. In spring 2012, the NPS is publishing the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Preliminary Alternative Concepts Workbook*, with four planned workshops and two webinars. These forums will be an opportunity to explore trade-offs between alternatives and provide feedback on the range of alternatives. By fall 2012, the draft environmental impact statement will be released, followed by a 90-day public comment period. The NPS will hold a series of workshops and webinars during that time (see below).

What are alternatives?

There is often more than one way to achieve our common goal to protect park resources. The Merced River Plan must explore and propose a reasonable and feasible range of alternatives to manage and protect the river. What are alternatives? Alternatives are a grouping of management options that are often organized around a theme. All alternatives will involve a

series of trade-offs; for example, an area can't be restored to natural conditions and develop new camping or parking at the same location. All alternatives must be consistent with NPS management policies and should collectively provide a range of options for addressing issues raised in public comment. One of the alternatives will be selected as a preferred alternative.

What are the opportunities to get involved?

We offer several spring 2012 opportunities for you to let us know what you think about the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan Alternative Concepts Workbook*. To comment on these preliminary alternative concepts, you may use the workbook's comment form or visit the Merced River Plan Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website. Comments are most useful when made through this website. Also comment by visiting the MRP webpage or by submitting email to [yose\\_planning@nps.gov](mailto:yose_planning@nps.gov) or via U.S. mail at the following address:

Superintendent  
Yosemite National Park  
Attn: Merced River Plan  
P.O. Box 577  
Yosemite, CA 95389

Input we receive during internal and external workshops, site visits, and the administrative and public review of these preliminary alternative concepts will be examined and used to refine the alternatives that will be analyzed in the draft environmental impact statement.

- Alternative Concepts Workbooks available mid-March online and paper copies in late March.
- Comment period open through April 20 on PEPC: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/MRPAlternatives>
- Merced River Plan information: [www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/mrp.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/mrp.htm). Call (209) 379-1110.

Merced River Plan 2012 Public Workshops and Webinars		
Date	Time	Location
March 28	9-11:30 a.m. workshop	Yosemite Valley East Auditorium
	1-3 p.m. site visit	Yosemite National Park
April 4	5:30-8 p.m. workshop	Fort Mason Center Golden Gate Room San Francisco
April 12	2-4 p.m. site visit	El Portal Community Center
	5:30-8 p.m. workshop	El Portal
April 13	10 a.m.-Noon site visit	Wawona Community Center
	1-3:30 p.m. workshop	Wawona
Webinars	10 a.m.-noon March 27 6:30-8:30 p.m. April 11	Register at <a href="http://yose.webex.com">yose.webex.com</a>