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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

September 15, 2008

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Dear Yosemite National Park Planners,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your request for input, as it relates to the Tenaya Lake Scoping Study.

Here are my thoughts and suggestions as follows:

There is almost nothing whatsoever that needs fixing. You would be doing Yosemite justice and give the public more trust in you if you were to tell the Yosemite Fund that their money is not required for improvements at Tenaya Lake. At least, I would be impressed.

That is, I should say, unless you might consider using some of their money to replace a few of the drive-in and walk-in campsites that were removed from the area in haste, during an ill-conceived era when the thought that the only way to improve something is to remove something. My thoughts on this as follows:

My recommendation would be for no more than 12 or 15 campsites, which should be separated by at least 75 to 100 feet between them, located on the west end of the lake in the forest, not near the lake. They should be available by way of a lottery system only. They should epitomize the essence of what a great Yosemite camping experience should be for those who car-camp. Let them bring their water in. Believe me, they won't mind if they are lucky enough to get one of the very few campsites via the lottery. The lottery could be designed around the same criteria as the High Sierra Camp lottery. All sewage would be removed, and all campsites would be at least 200 feet from any water, such as Tenaya Creek, etc.

The roads should not be graded rarely. They should not be paved. An initial bed of about six inches of gravel is all that is needed. After that, it should be covered with a seasonal layer of wood chips, preferably cedar. The restrooms should be modern but portable outhouses that could be removed in the winter. Or, they could be the new style of vault toilets with hand sanitizer dispensers, like in many of the Forest Service campgrounds these days.

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Campfires should be restricted to very small campfire rings. I recommend they be like those used in the Forest Service Campsites in the Twin Lakes area outside of Bridgeport, CA, where a large fire is not an option due to fire ring size constraints. For that matter, you wouldn't even have to allow campfires.

A real park Ranger should be required to walk the campsite in the evenings, talking to people about Yosemite related things, and bear issues, while inviting them to his 8pm campfire talk, where intelligent Yosemite related discussions occur, without such things as songs about where "Buffalo do roam and skies are clear all day". Many people don't go to campfires because they are geared towards children. Not that that is a bad thing, I'm just suggesting something that is geared for adults for a change.

There should be a rule that no electronic music be allowed, i.e. boom boxes, car speakers, etc. I feel that such a rule should be enforced in all campgrounds park wide. If they want to hear music, tell them to bring earphones. Quiet-time should be strictly enforced and there should no pets allowed. The goal should be to develop a place where car campers can experience a very natural camping experience in a small campground, atypical of a National Park, in a place like Tenaya Lake that is beautiful beyond description.

On the east end of the lake, there could be an equivalent number of walk-in campground. I recommend it be named after Chief Tenaya himself, where only about 12 or 15 walk-in camp sites are available, also on a lottery system only. There should be a small central campfire circle, perhaps located somewhere between these two campgrounds, maybe on that peninsula where day-use picnic tables are now, with a few logs for benches. Or, maybe one on either end, where a ranger could have talks for both of the campgrounds, but on opposite days during the summer.

Campfires could be an opportunity to teach people about Yosemite's Native American history, John Muir's writings, flora, fauna and geological and native American history; things like that, with the goal of imparting a unique Yosemite camping experience that brings people closer to nature. It's an ideal place for camping, as there are spectacular hiking trails in the area that lead to parts of the park that people otherwise do not see unless they backpack. Such a campground location could demonstrate to the public where the future of Yosemite camping could be headed.

Otherwise, if you're not interested in doing any of that, there are no improvements needed to, or around, Tenaya Lake. We use the Tioga entrance

exclusively in season. We have walked around and kayaked the lake many times over my 58 years. We are very familiar with it. No improvements please. Improvements have a tendency to draw people to a place. Whatever you do, please don't make the mistake of doing to Tenaya Lake what you did at the Lower Falls area, or even the Fern Springs area, where you did things only because you had too much money to spend.

There is no need to put in any granite or concrete curbs anywhere. No cedar fences or paved walk ways. No flush toilets. No added parking areas. If there are too many cars, let them keep driving. And, absolutely NO tour bus parking.

Any ideas you have to control congestion and traffic should not be addressed here in the Tenaya Lake scoping study. In no way should Tenaya Lake be redesigned in such a way that it could "accommodate all who want to come", as Dave Mihalic used to like to say about Yosemite in general. Unlike Mike Tollefson, who said he "didn't want to turn anyone away", it's time to turn people away if it means the Yosemite experience is one that includes crowds, fences, paved trails, more tour buses, etc. If by "improvements" you mean adding more infrastructure in any way, don't do it.

It was probably a mistake for Steve Mather to put the Tioga Road through there in the first place, blasting through untouched granite, etc. All traffic and crowding issues should be mitigated at the gate, and only at the gate, with a strictly enforced User Carrying Capacity limit on how many people are allowed to come into the park via day-tripping, on a day when established quotas are reached.

There should be a scoping study for those quotes separate from this, and before this study is done. That study should determine how to address issues that lead up to establishing a quota, how to manage the quota, and then, lastly, how to make improvements such as these at Tenaya Lake only after the concept of less crowding and restricted traffic has been not only addressed, but put into place. Then, and only then would anyone be able to know how to deal with human impacts, once the level of human impacts are known.

However you determine how to address way to deal with who is allowed into the park when the park reaches capacity levels should be addressed in that scoping study, where the rules and regulations could be discussed and debated with public input in order to find the best solutions for the entire park, not

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individual areas such as this. Otherwise, you will get spill over from Yosemite Valley.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my thoughts on improving Tenaya Lake.

Regards,



Truckee, CA 96161

