Mariposa Grove Restoration EIS

Public Scoping
Yosemite National Park
Mariposa Grove Restoration

Project Milestones

Project Timeline

2010:
- Data Collection

2011:
- Pre-Design
- Public Scoping
  - Summer/Fall 2011

2012:
- Planning & Compliance
  - Winter/Spring 2012
- Alternatives Development
- Draft EIS for Public Review
  - Summer 2012
- Final EIS for Public Review
  - December 2012

2013:
- Design Development

2014:
- Ground Breaking
- Yosemite Grant Sesquicentennial
  - June 2014

2015:

2016:
- Ribbon Cutting
- National Park Service Centennial
  - August 2016

Restoration Timeline

0 ±
Grizzly Giant was a young tree

1864
Yosemite Grant

2010–2016
Yosemite Grant Bicentennial

2064
Taking a Trip Through Time...
Early Threats to Sequoia Groves

Sequoia wood is very resistant to decay but overall can be brittle and fibrous. Historically, it was typically used for shingles and fence posts.

In 1891, the Mark Twain Tree was cut down so that sections of it could be displayed in museums.
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Calaveras Grove of Big Trees
Galen Clark

Clark was considered the “Guardian of the Mariposa Grove.” Many travelers to the Grove stayed at Clark’s Station. Mount Clark and the Clark Range were named in his honor.
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Jessie Benton Fremont

John Conness
Protection of the Mariposa Grove

“An Act Authorizing a Grant to the State of California of the “Yo-Semite Valley,” and of the Land embracing the “Mariposa Big Tree Grove”

--- signed by President Lincoln, June 30, 1864.

The first legislation passed by Congress to specifically set aside public lands for their scenic values and “be held for public uses, resort and recreation.”

Wawona Tree ca. 1928

US Army soldiers in the Mariposa Grove, 1899
Galen Clark as Guardian
The Naming of the Trees

“At the request of Galen Clark, our host at Mariposa, & who is by State appointment the Protector of the trees, & who went with us to the Mammoth Groves, I selected a *Sequoia gigantea*, near Galen's Hospice, in the presence of our party, & named it Samoset, in memory of the first Indian ally of the Plymouth Colony, and I gave Mr. Clark directions to procure a tin plate, & have the inscription painted thereon in the usual form of the named trees;  

*Samoset*  
12 May  
1871  

& paid him its cost. The tree was a strong healthy one, girth at 2.5 feet from the ground, 50 feet.”

—*The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Volume XVI (1866-1882), p. 239
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Early Cavalry Protection

The Fallen Monarch provided a backdrop for the U.S. Army each summer from 1891 through 1914 when cavalrymen rode from San Francisco to Yosemite to protect the park.
Early Visitation
Teddy Roosevelt Visits the Grove as President

Roosevelt’s party visited by stagecoach in 1903

Roosevelt at the Grizzly Giant

Roosevelt & Muir
Accommodating Motor Vehicles in the Park
Motor Vehicles and the Mariposa Grove
Visitor Services in the Grove

Numerous facilities have been built in the Grove: Big Tree Lodge, campgrounds, a ranger station, the museum, various roads & trails, a gift shop, parking lots, restrooms and other visitor accommodations. Many have also been removed over time because of their impacts to the forest health.
Current Infrastructure in the Mariposa Grove
The Civilian Conservation Corps

The CCC worked throughout the park and made improvements to numerous sites. Within the Mariposa Grove, CCC work included clearing of fir trees and the creation of trails. The dirt and gravel road through the Grove was paved in 1934.

CCC crews clearing drainage ditches in Wawona Meadow

CCC crews at work in the park between 1933-1942
World War II and the Mariposa Grove

Ansel Adams documented several military visits to the Grove. The Wawona Tree remained a favorite photo location.
Wawona Tunnel Tree

1962

Post -
1968

c. 1880s

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A Changing Understanding of Grove Health

Beginning in the 1930s, managers began to take measures to protect the trees.

Visitors used to be able to drive to and gather around the base of the Grizzly Giant.

The road by the Grizzly Giant was eventually relocated away from three for the protection of its roots.

The Wawona Tunnel Tree fell after a particularly heavy snowfall in 1969.
Vehicles in the Grove

After much discussion, public vehicle access to the Grove ended in 1970:

1) “to serve the best interest of the public in experiencing enjoyment and fulfillment of the Grove,”

2) if offered “the best and widest opportunities for providing significant interpretive services,” and

3) it ensured the “preservation of the specimen sequoias, as well as the unique ecology associate with the sequoia community.”
Prescribed Fires

In 1971, the park re-introduced fire within the Grove allowing sequoia seeds to germinate and grow, ensuring generations of sequoias living into the future.
Prescribed Fire Over Time
General Management Plan Goals (NPS, 1980)

Mariposa Grove
- Remove parking from the lower grove
- Provide only visitor facilities consistent with preservation of the unique ecosystem
- Provide off-season parking at the Grove

South Entrance Station
- Provide park orientation/information
- Provide staging facilities for the Mariposa Grove
- Redesign the South Entrance Station
- Provide adequate road to the Grove for bus access
Giant Sequoias Continue to Inspire

Artists have been inspired by the giant sequoias since visitors first came to the site. This project will help ensure that giant sequoias continue to inspire visitors for generations to come.
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Public Scoping is going on now…
Please Get Involved!

Site Visit: October 14th at 9:30-11:00am at the Mariposa Grove (meet at the gift shop)
What should the Grove look like in 150 years?