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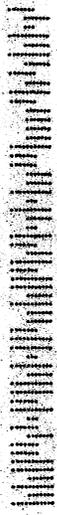
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TO: Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Merced River Plan
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389



June 7, 07

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

RECEIVED
MRP-SEIS-104
JUN 12 2007
P. 1071
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

I participated in the public process of preparing long range plans for Yosemite Valley and the Merced River, and was very pleased with the resulting plans.

Unfortunately, some of the requirements of those general plans have not been met yet.

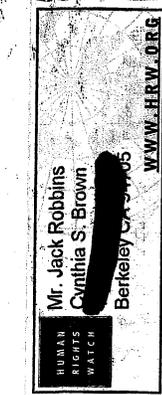
So, I urge that the new plan include the following, which I thought we had already achieved:

1. Close the stable in Yosemite Valley & naturalize the area.
2. Reduce the pack and stock impacts which are excessive.
3. Limit the commercial packpack trips allowed in the Merced River Corridor
4. Close the High Sierra Camps & restore the routes

Sincerely yours

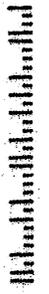
Jack Robbins

[REDACTED]
Berkeley CA 94705



OAKLAND CA 946
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*Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Forest River Plan
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite CA 95389*



MRP-SEIS-105
P. 1074

L. Pierce Loberg
Civil Engineer
[Redacted]
Wawona, CA 95389
[Redacted]

June 7, 2007

Mr. Michael J. Tollefson
Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
PO Box 577
Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

REF: Scoping Comments for Merced River Plan (MRP)

Dear Mike:

I thank you for the opportunity to provide Scoping Comments on the recently Court ordered Comprehensive Management Plan for the Merced River.

I represented WAPOA in the earlier planning process and had submitted the enclosed letter on the Draft MRP. I am resubmitting the letter as new Scoping Comments because the letter was not considered by the NPS in drafting the earlier final MRP. It had been ruled as having not been timely filed even though it had been hand delivered to the superintendent's office.

It was good that the earlier MRP designated the Wawona area as *Recreational* and not *Scenic* as had been proposed. Because of the Court's view of user capacity, however, I feel it is all the more important that Section 35 in Wawona be excluded from the MRP river corridor altogether.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act does not apply to private land and much of the area within the river corridor in Section 35 is private. Development issues within the corridor such as conflicts between County and NPS zoning were addressed in the Record of Decision for the earlier plan. These should be included in any new MRP. Fixed user limits in this area as mandated by the Court, however, would be impossible to enforce. It would be best to follow the direction of former superintendent Mihalic and delete Section 35 from the MRP.

Sincerely,



L. Pierce Loberg, P.E., F.NSPE
Civil Engineer

Encl. WAPOA letter dated March 23, 2000 to Supt. David Mihalic

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MRP-SEIS-105
A-2004

March 23, 2000

Mr. David Mihalic
Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Hand delivered

REF: Draft Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan

Dear David:

This is the letter you requested following our meetings in your office on February 29 and March 2, 2000. The second meeting was also attended by Deputy Superintendent Kevin Cann. The Merced River Plan (MRP) was among the items we discussed and is the subject of this letter.

You rejected my verbal request for a sixty day extension of the public comment period. After two days of thinking about it, I agreed with your assessment that conditions are favorable now to move promptly on completing the various Park planning projects. As you put it, "...the stars are lined up. An opportunity such as this might not occur again for some time". I expressed concern, however, about the planning process; that the techniques being employed would produce a bad plan, one that would ultimately lack public support and acceptance.

Following the recent court ruling, the MRP has been elevated from obscurity to a position equal to the General Management Plan (GMP). I expressed my view that the general public is unaware that the MRP is an **amendment** to the GMP. The comprehensive Yosemite Valley Plan and others to follow will be subordinate to the MRP as well as the GMP. While the MRP does not implement, it does set management guidelines that would facilitate changes not now allowed.

We talked about facilities, such as the Yosemite Lodge, that were constructed under the Mission 66 program and sanctioned to remain under the GMP which are now targets for elimination. Historic Valley campgrounds, slated to continue by the GMP, were removed following the '97 flood and may never be rebuilt according to MRP alternatives under consideration.

While I have a personal interest in the Valley, the changes to the Draft MRP that I have requested on behalf of WAPOA are limited to Wawona and the South Fork and are of paramount interest to our members.

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P. 384

Mr. David Mihalic, Superintendent
March 23, 2000
Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan
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PROPOSED CHANGE NO. 1

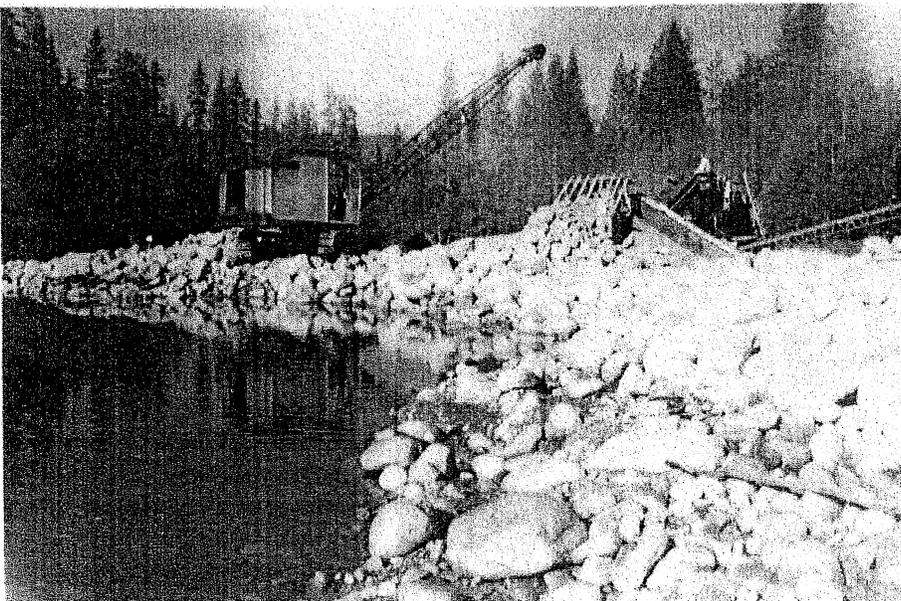
The first change I proposed was to simply remove the proposed zoning from within Section 35. The Wawona Specific Plan is the mechanism that should be used to manage that portion of the river corridor. In Alternative no. 2, that would mean removing the proposed 2B Discovery zone and incorporate appropriate language in the present Flood Plain zone. As I stated, the Land Use Subcommittee of the Wawona Town Plan Advisory Committee has already recommended such a change. Whereas, applying new zoning on top of existing zoning would lead to inevitable conflicts, utilizing the existing zoning document would eliminate conflicts and insure that the language would apply to private as well as public property.

You said, "That's a good idea", and directed Kevin Cann to inform Amy Scheneckenburger.

PROPOSED CHANGE NO. 2

The second change I proposed was to classify the South Fork between the impoundment and the campground as *Recreational*, instead of *Scenic*. According to the WSR Act, classification is to be based on the level of existing or prior development. The river in Wawona is readily accessible by road, it has extensive development and has now and in the past had impoundment and diversion.

For Wawona to be properly classified as *Scenic*, it would have to be "...free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads." I compared the classifications in the Draft MRP for El Portal and Wawona and mentioned examples of historic activity in Wawona that would support a *Recreational* classification.



The photo is evidence of the quarry and rock crusher operation I described. Product from this operation in Wawona was used by the NPS, the concessionaire and others for projects in the Park during the 1960s. Much earlier, the Washburn's Wawona Hotel Co. enterprise was a major development by today's standards. There was a power house, barns, river

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Mr. David Mihalic, Superintendent
March 23, 2000
Merced Wild and Scenic River Management Plan
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fords, bridge, dams for an ice pond, ice house, sewage treatment plant, slaughterhouse and even a fish hatchery on the banks of the South Fork. There was a two-mile long ditch that conveyed water from the river to the Hotel complex and meadow for power generation and irrigation. In 1907, plans were prepared for a dam to be constructed just above the campground. The U.S. Army occupied an area along the river known as Soldier's Flat. Physical evidence of many of these activities on the South Fork exist today. I would be pleased to give you a tour of Wawona and show you the evidence of development, both past and present.

PROPOSED CHANGE NO. 3

Not discussed in our meetings but of equal importance is the proposed River Protection Overlay. To manage this variable-width corridor through Section 35 would be a nightmare. Management actions taken on one portion of the river invariably affect upstream property. Again, I would propose that management policies envisioned for this overlay be incorporated in the existing Flood Plain zone. The 1997 flood provides a recent demarcation of the limits of river management and zoning that are not likely to be challenged. The otherwise inevitable conflicts would be avoided. I would urge you to exclude Section 35 from the proposed overlay.

I stated that WAPOA could support Alternative no. 2, if these changes were made to the Draft MRP.

Sincerely,

L. Pierce Loberg
President

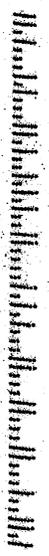
cc: Amy Scheneckenburger, MRP Project Manager
Dave Ashe, Wawona District Ranger
WAPOA Board of Directors

L. Pierce Loberg
Civil Engineer
Wawona, CA 95389

Mr. Michael J. Tollefson
Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
PO Box 577
Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

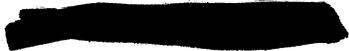


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MRP-SEIS-106
JUN 12 2007
P. 183
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Eugene B. Davis



Morgan Hill, California 95037-3077

June 6, 2007

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

The following are my scoping comments for the new Wild and Scenic River plan for the parts of the main stem and South Fork of the Merced River within the jurisdiction of the National Park Service:

One of the goals of the planning process is to define the Outstanding Remarkable values of these rivers. With respect to the South Fork, my only experience is at Wawona, where it adds to the historic setting. I believe the Wawona Hotel has the oldest buildings in which one can rent a room for a night in any of the major scenic national parks, and its preservation as a well maintained, functioning hotel would be one of my priorities in the plan.

The remainder of my remarks will be in reference to the main stem, which I shall refer to simply as "the River" or "the Merced River".

The Merced River's truly Outstandingly Remarkable scenic value is that it flows freely through Yosemite Valley, one of the most scenic areas on this Earth. One of the things to consider in the plan is if a river can be free flowing when there are some bridges with abutments and some retaining walls to help support roads and trails (and a gauging station). My feeling is that it can be. The Merced has many moods in its journey through Yosemite that I value. It can be quite peaceful at many places in the east end of the valley, more clearly flowing near the west end and a raging and rocky torrent at Happy Isles. All of which are Outstandingly Remarkable values. In California we have very few free flowing rivers left, so having the Merced in such a striking setting is extremely valuable. Another issue in the plan is the amount of human presence that can be around the river and still have it be Wild and Scenic. I feel that having humans observe it (and photograph or sketch it) does not detract from its wildness and certainly not from it being scenic. In part it depends on whether the other humans are beside you or in front of you across the River. Looking at a scene alone or in the company of several other people is the same to me. I feel strongly that if parts of the River are not readily accessible to large numbers of people, then part of the value of the designation will be lost. In our dry part of the world, the value of an actual free flowing river can only be well appreciated by those who see it. By dividing the route of the River into zones one can create areas of different expectations for social interaction. For example, those walking from Happy Isles up (and it is certainly up) to the bridge from which one

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can see Vernal Falls (Vernal and Nevada Falls are certainly another Outstandingly Remarkable value) can expect to encounter many other people on the trail. In fact, the whole experience is a social one, sharing information about the trail and the sights with others, often complete strangers. In my opinion this adds to the experience and when one sees the River below the trail cascading wildly through boulders, it adds another dimension to its value as a Wild and Scenic river. As one ascends further up the staircase, past the Silver Apron, to the area below Nevada Falls, and then up the switchbacks beside Nevada Falls, the crowds thin progressively. If then one walks over the crest into Little Yosemite Valley, one finds a peaceful river and very few other people. There is a great sense of tranquility or serenity, another Outstandingly Remarkable value. However one does not have to have the physical ability to hike that far in order to find places of serenity. Along the River near the Ahwahnee one experiences a quietly flowing serene river, usually with very few other people present. And at Happy Isles, though the River is anything but serene, my experience is that if you walk out to the upstream end of the islands, you will be alone or close to it in a very natural setting, and everyone seems to be in a quiet, contemplative mood. I feel that access is important and those who want a quieter experience can find it if they just go to the right places, rather than trying to legislate limits on the number of people near the river, (something I doubt is enforceable).

Another question is whether specific activities of humans or domestic animals harms the River itself, by polluting it or by destroying its banks by random entrance onto them. I think the whole issue of domestic equines needs to be examined. They have great potential for pollution and their droppings make walking on trails that they use unpleasant. If they are still maintained in Yosemite Valley or Wawona for trail rides, I would suggest that such activities no longer be allowed and the equines that were used for that purpose be removed. The whole issue of their use in supplying the High Sierra camps needs to be examined. I wonder if one large helicopter taking in supplies and taking out garbage once or twice a week would be less of an intrusion than the pack trains. In terms of bank preservation, I think the part of the Housekeeping Camp that immediately abuts the River should be removed and I think all camp sites should be set back from the River's edge. Picnic tables should also be set back from the River's edge, but they (and campsites) can be within viewing distance of the River.

Another issue to be addressed on the plan is what level of human habitation should be accommodated in Yosemite Valley and in El Portal. One needs to start, in my opinion, with the knowledge that Yosemite Valley (referred to as "the Valley" hereafter) has been occupied by humans for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. The main settled area is called Yosemite Village because, in my opinion, it is one. It is unreasonable to expect the entire Valley to have the look of a place undisturbed by human activity. It is also unreasonable to expect that the entire length of the River in the Valley have an undisturbed look. And it is most unreasonable to expect that there will be a broad band of natural area surrounding the River as it flows through the Valley. The Valley is not wilderness and I do not believe that it should be as it is too scenic to be seen only by a few. One would expect that the historically existing development would remain and be maintained. Concerns about the number of people in Yosemite Valley should not be a reason for continuing to block the needed conversion of Valley rooms for rent by the night from an over supply of tent cabins (which are inexpensive, but do not have the amenities many

people expect) to a more reasonable supply of midpriced rooms by building more rooms at Yosemite Lodge.

As to the question of how many people should be allowed east of the El Capitan crossover at any given time, I would suggest that procedures already developed be used. On the few occasions that the roads in the east end of the valley become hopelessly clogged, there is an existing system for limiting the number of day users. I do not believe existing usage is degrading the River, except for the items that I mentioned in the second paragraph above. In addition, the question of how much (if any) rafting should be allowed in the River needs to be addressed (as well as where it should be allowed).

In summery, I value the Merced River through Yosemite greatly the way it is. I value the outstanding scenic values it has the entire way from the wilderness to Briceberg. And I value the human structures (mainly the roads and the bridges) that make it possible for all to see it and enjoy it. I also value the variety of lodging and camping possibilities along it that allow persons of varied financial means and tastes visit the River and its incomparable Valley. I believe that this planning process should reaffirm what is there now and not be used as a way to reduce its accessibility in the future.

Eugene Davis

Mr Eugene B Davis

1514000000

Morgan Hill, CA 95037



SUPERINTENDENT
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK
ATTN: MERCED RIVER PLAN
P.O. Box 577
YOSEMITE, CALIFORNIA 95389



June 9, 2007

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MRP-SEIS-107
JUN 12 2007

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Merced River Plan
PO Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Superintendent,

I am a property owner in Wawona. My first visit to Wawona was the summer of 1972. I worked at the Hotel Wawona that season and came back for five more seasons to work. I am deeply concerned about the new zoning that may be applied to Wawona, section 35. I am opposed to any new development in the community. This would include camp grounds and high density employee housing. Please help to preserve this unique community as it is.

Thank You.

James F. Northcutt

James F. Northcutt

[REDACTED]
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

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James F. Northcutt

[Redacted]
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688

SANTA ANA CA 927

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Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Merced River Plan
PO Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

95389-0577



