



"Mark Sutherlin"

06/07/2007 05:00 PM
MST

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Merced River Scoping Study

RECEIVED
MRP-SES-57
JUN 09 2007
p. 10/2
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Yosemite National Park Service,

As it relates to the Merced River Scoping study, I would like to quote David Brower from a statement he made back in 1966, when he so precisely expresses my view regarding the Merced River Plan Scoping Study in these simple words, "We feel you don't have a conservation policy unless you have a population policy."

By "population policy", I equate that to a "carrying capacity". To have a Wild and Scenic River Plan, you need an human impact study. And in order to do that, you should pin point the level of humans that the eco system can handle along the Yosemite Valley section of the Merced River well before river eco system degradation is a factor. In other words, a "carrying capacity" which would allow a set number of people allowed into the park on a busy day should be established as a part of an well conceived Merced River Plan.

Once you establish that, it will be time to reopen the Yosemite Valley Plan, the old one of which has now been eclipsed by the Federal Court's requirement that a "carrying capacity" must be included. The Yosemite Valley Plan has to have a blue print to follow, which is of course a correctly completed Merced River Plan. Because this has yet to take place, according to the current court system's decision, you must conclude that the Yosemite Valley Plan that you have now should be deemed outdated, obsolete, and tossed out. A new Yosemite Valley Plan will need to be re-constructed, from scratch, after you have a new Merced River Plan.

To do this, you need to make all Yosemite Valley Plan evaluations relative to what the park was like before the flood, and, before the old, out dated Merced River Plan. All campgrounds that were in place before the flood and before the previous plan should be put back on the table as if they were never removed, regardless of the fact that the park managers believed that the flood, by way of some "Divine Hand", gave them an opportunity to reevaluate what to do with the park. This is false. This statement by the Yosemite National Park Service and Bruce Babbitt, former Secretary of Interior is absolutely irrelevant, because only a Merced River Plan complete with Carrying Capacity can make that kind of a determination.

The fact is, the park service wants the public to believe that the flood gave them the opportunity to skip the Merced River Plan when it comes to these campgrounds, because God intervened and made a Divine determination regarding the campgrounds. This is not so. Floods happen. They damage campgrounds all the time. All that is needed is to repair the damage as the park told congress they would do when asking for Flood Recover money from congress in 1997. The park service's feet should be held to the fire and these campgrounds should be replaced, or, they should have to give that flood recovery money back. ONLY a Merced River Plan, complete with a court ordered carrying capacity, should be the prevailing authority to determine what is allowed in the Yosemite Valley Plan.

By allowing the park service to make the statement that it was God's idea to wipe out these campgrounds is the same as believing that the flood has power over the court system and is the authority over a properly constructed Merced River Plan. Not true. There is a legal system in place here, and that system has declared that a Merced River Plan with a Carrying Capacity should be the governing power over

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P. 2022

what is allowed or not allowed in the Yosemite Valley Plan . Because this wasn't factored in, a new Yosemite Valley Plan should be the course of action after the new Merced River Plan is completed .

I would like to suggest, that camping would be a great use for the Merced River 's seasonal and hundred year flood zone because campers use the area during the opposite seasons of the year . The average elevation of Upper Rivers Campground, for a point of reference, is easily ten feet above the average spring water elevation of the river . I have measured it. This campground could only flood about once or twice in a hundred years, which should be mentioned in the Merced River Plan, as this scientific data is undisputable, and relevant to the Merced River Plan .

The people's voice should prevail more in this planning process than in the last planning process . To accomplish this, you already have tens of thousands of names and addresses of the many previous Yosemite Valley campers who probably have strong opinions regarding these issues, so why don 't you contact them? There is no question that those former campers, many of whom have camped in Yosemite for generations, should be directly solicited for their input on what to do with these campground areas BEFORE you allow yourselves to believe that Bruce Babbitt is capable of identifying God 's intervention. You have their contact information, and you should use it to get them involved .

The park had been given money by congress to do just that in the flood recovery effort . The fact that Bruce Babbitt even made that statement about the "Divine Hand" being involved before the original Merced River Plan was finished, clearly suggest that it was actually the park 's plan to circumvent the planning process with that one statement. The truth is that the park had already said that they wanted to remove all campgrounds on the north side of the river in a statement two years prior to the 1997 flood, back in 1995. The park service new that the public would never have allowed them to take all those campsites out, so they claimed that God was liable for that decision . By doing this, the park service claimed to be divinely justified in taking the entire subject of restoring these campgrounds off the planning table during the remainder of the Scoping studies that still needed to be completed at that time .

Just about every time someone claims to know the Divine will of God, the odds are good that that this person is going to tell you that for some odd coincidence, God 's ideas just happen to coincide with their own ideas, just as was the case this time . That the park service said this is what they wanted to remove those campgrounds, two years prior, suggests to me that God clearly had nothing to do with this flood coincidence.

Let's cut to the chase and let your former campers weigh in on a New Merced River Plan, as mentioned above, and after that you need to develop a brand new Yosemite Valley Plan that makes better use of these campgrounds. If you don't want to, I hope the courts make you do it.

As mentioned above, you have all the contact information of your former campers . So, why not bring them into this discussion? They too want what 's best for Yosemite.

Thank you,

Bette Sutherlin

[REDACTED]
Truckee, CA 96161

[REDACTED] m

Home: (530) 587-1518



"Brian @ Ouzounian Constructors, Inc."

06/09/2007 08:30 AM
MST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc: Elexis_Mayer@nps.gov, Kristina_Rylands@nps.gov
Subject: 2nd Comments for New MercedRiverPlan

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MRP-SEIS-58
JUN 09 2007
P. 1032
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

June 9, 2007

Dear YNPS Planning Staff:

This is to submit second comments for the latest Merced River Plan (MRP) as a supplement to my previous submission on June 8, 2007, on behalf of the Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition.

This writing is to address process and procedure related to all planning efforts by the NPS and the following elaborates:

- a. No clear structure or procedure for the public process has been established;
- b. Allowing the NPS to formulate this procedure is like the "fox guarding the hen house;"
- c. At a minimum, Congress, including the House Resource Committee, should establish guidelines so as to prevent the private interests within all our parks and the Department of Interior from conflicts of interest. Private individuals from the public should assist in this planning procedure process.
- d. The NPS has shown itself incompetent to be fair, reasonable, and just in its outreach to the public for its plans, specifically related to Yosemite, which is the spear head of planning for other national parks.
- e. To date, scant and scattered hearings and open houses have occurred to give the perception of a public process. The General Management Plan (GMP) was the start of their misguided policies. As it went unchallenged except for this writer's efforts locally and in Washington DC, it has continued on a path of deception and unfair practices.
- f. Evaluating each plans' demographic and quantitative analysis clearly shows the poor and declining response over the years, which translates as "unproductive" and "cloudy" and "suspect" results. The public participation in the planning process has dwindled to a few over the years based upon the public continuing negative view of our NPS. Simply count the numbers of respondents over the years, plan by plan. The only get smaller. This writer was the only one to testify at a past Southern California MRP hearing in Burbank, in 1995 on a Thursday evening. Only one other elderly woman attended but when she saw the court reporter and the 5 minute limit and the 35 NPS staff watching her, she left the venue out of worry! The questions to me by the Superintendent Mike Tollefson was "Why do you believe there is such a poor turnout tonight?" The answer was simple; "The NPS has lost the trust and confidence of the public to be effective and responsive to their participation." Many of past respondents were campers and the NPS failed to show positive response to their comments.
- g. Even after federal courts slapped the hands of the NPS over the MRP, the NPS continued on the same process for the Tuolumne River Plan (TRP) without shame. Would this alone not disqualify the TRP as it now is in planning? A "HOLD" on that plan should be implemented.
- h. Past NPS personnel have tainted the MRP as joint spouses conducted the planning process, carried over from previous plans using different names that deceived the public. Specifically, these were dependents of the past Western Regional Director.

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P. 2 of 2

- i. All Yosemite Plans should be suspended until a process is agreed upon, including the subject, court ordered revised MRP and the illegal Yosemite Valley Plan.
- j. It is clear that the NPS has gone unsupervised over the past two decades and that private interests have corrupted the NPS. Since the NPS has a financial interest in the profits from the operation of the parks, an objective process is needed and warranted.
- k. The current planning efforts in Yosemite have profit motives written all over them, including the closure of the two "Rivers" campgrounds after the flood to allow the busing plan to be implemented in the future master scheme and so that the NPS can pat itself on the backs, in public, as to how the development plans are qualified to proceed based upon the "greening up" or "restoration" of these parcels; when in fact the NPS planned this land swap for their own profit motivations or that of the concessionaire present and future.
- l. The closure of the Rivers Campgrounds allowed the NPS to continue their development master plan by using this land as a laydown yard for the master plan utilities project. Were it not for this land, the project would have had harder alternatives for construction temporary facilities.

All in all, much more needs to be addressed by the NPS to properly be good stewards of our Yosemite, the MRP and future projects. Failure to address the above, egregiously breaches the duties of the NPS, charged with care, custody, and control of its original 1864 commission by President Lincoln (a good camper). No doubt President Theodore Roosevelt felt the same and loved to camp. Contrary to Yosemite's Superintendent, Mike Tollefson in his May, 2007, newsletter (Volume 31), the NPS does not have the "privilege" of managing the Merced River; it has the DUTY to manage it for the public trust via preservation and enjoyment to perpetuity.

Brian H. Ouzounian
Co-Founder
Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition



Lurella Clohessy

06/05/2007 09:53 AM
MST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov

cc:

Subject: Re: Comments to Yosemite National Park

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MRP-5215-59

JUN 09 2007

P. 1081

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Superintendent:

I would like to make the following comments for the Merced River Plan:

As a frequent visitor to Yosemite I believe the following changes should be considered for the good of ALL the people. Due to the environmental impact on trails and wilderness areas the riding stables should be closed and the site returned to a natural state as called for in the Yosemite Valley Plan. Trails have become eroded and water contaminated due to saddle stock and pack animals. The Merced River corridor must be protected from the over use of commercial packstock enterpises.

I long for a hiking and backpacking experience that is pristine and free from contamination of pack animals. To preserve our wilderness these changes must be considered.

The High Sierra Camps (HSCs) at Vogelsang, Merced Lake, Sunrise and May Lake are creating a negative impact on the Merced River. These campsites are luxury vacations for the minority. There is no sewage treatment plant, and wastewater from these facilities pollutes the meadows, soils, and waters of the Merced River. In addition, stock animals must travel back and forth to carry needed supplies to these camps adding to the already critical situation that exists on our hiking trails.

Lucille Clohessy

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 YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK



"Audrey Yee"
 [Redacted]
 06/05/2007 11:31 AM
 MST

To: <yose_planning@nps.gov>
 cc:
 Subject: Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan

To: David A. Mihalic, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
 From: The Wong Family, Wawona

Dear Superintendent Mihalic,

Our family purchased our cabin in Wawona in 1950 and since that time, four generations of Wongs have enjoyed the serenity and beautiful natural setting it offers. Also during those years, as we own the last cabin on the river side of Forest Road, we have seen an increase in traffic and noise heading to the Seventh Day Adventist Camp as well as to the swinging bridge.

We would like to go on record commenting that any designated land use placed in the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan which would permit public campgrounds or high density employee housing within section 35 would be severely detrimental to our quiet Wawona community. We cherish the peacefulness of the area, and we believe that the public, park employees, and Wawona residents alike would not benefit from further degradation and high density use of Wawona.

Thank you,
 Ruth W. Wong
 Sandra Wong Yee
 Rodney E. Wong
 Audrey L. Yee
 Stephanie L. Yee
 Laurence F. Yee

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MRP-SEIS-61
JUN 09 2007
P. 1071



James Freund
<[redacted]>
> [redacted]

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
Cc: [redacted]

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

06/05/2007 02:30 PM
EST

Subject: Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan

Dear Sirs

As the owner of a cabin on the river in Wawona, I am concerned that the Park Service not develop their land in a manner inconsistent with the community of Wawona.

Since there are so many parcels of private property in Section 35, my suggestion would be to simply exempt this section from the Management Plan. This would have several beneficial effects:

- 1) It would simplify the plan, in-as-much as there are so many different situations which would have to be addressed in the town
- 2) It would have a positive effect on the relationship between the Park Service and the property owners
- 3) It would foster a greater sense of community within Wawona (among all parties- Park Service employees, Concessionaire employees, property holders, Redwoods, and so forth. This sense of community might well find expression in the form of donations beneficial to the Park and other public service activities.

If, in the alternative, it is not possible to exempt section 35 from the new plan, any development should be strictly limited to that which is keeping with the character of the town. Certainly public campgrounds or high density employee housing should be entirely avoided.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding these comments you might have. I appreciate the opportunity to provide you with my concerns.

Jim Freund

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"Kevin K"
 [Redacted]
 06/05/2007 09:08 AM
 EST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
 CC:
 Subject: Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan

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 MRP-SEIS-62
 JUN 09 2007
 P. 1052
 YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
 Attn: Merced River Plan

Dear Sir;

I am fortunate to be a resident of California and to live close enough to have visited Yosemite National Park many times for the past 20 years. As a person who cares about nature (probably like yourself or you would not be in the job you are in) and who is a fairly careful observer of nature, I would like to share some observations and give you input on the Merced River Plan.

All erosion and all sources of non natural runoff affect the Merced River. Horses have a disproportionately high ability to cause trail erosion and to trample meadows leading to erosion. They also have the ability to spread non-native grasses/plants and contaminate water directly thru defecation. And the smell of manure certainly detracts from the experience of visiting Yosemite when most people are there to smell the pines and fresh air.

Over time I have seen the effects of pack stock on the Merced Rivershed and that is Why I urge you to carefully consider their negative effects in completing the Merced Wild and Scenic River Plan:

- 1) I find it hard to believe that the riding stables still exist in the Yosemite Valley. The Yosemite Valley Plan of 2000 called for their removal and at the time even the commercial outfitter did not disagree. One can only imagine what was flushed into the Merced River during the 1997 flood (Yosemite Valley is predicted to flood into the Merced River about every 10 years).
- 2) All the area between the Tioga Pass Road and Yosemite Valley are high use areas and the only responsible way to manage them is to strictly limit if not ban the use of pack animals. This is not an unusual idea. The trail from Mt. Whitney Portal to the summit is closed to stock animals for just this reason.
- 3) I have hiked the trail thru Vogelsang camp only once because of all the unnatural clutter that is at the camp. To protect the Merced River watershed the

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P. 2022

high sierra camps should be closed. A few people may complain that the camps are a part of their childhood memories and they couldn't bear to see them closed. Well, firefall displays made by pushing bonfires off the valley rim and feeding the bears in front of spectator stands were part of some peoples's Yosemite memories, but they were stopped because of the damage they did to the environment. So it is with the high sierra camps and the bears, many supply horses, flies and sewage that accompany them. This is a high use backcountry area and it is easy enough to hike there.

Please consider these official public comments and keep me informed during this process.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kingma

[REDACTED]
El Cerrito, CA 94530
[REDACTED]



david atwater

06/04/2007 04:56 PM
MST

To: yose_planning@nps.gov
cc: george@radanovich.com
Subject: Merced River Plans

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MRP-SEIS-63
JUN 09 2007
P. 1872
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

To Whom It May Concern,

I am another yosemite lover, one of the first "clean" climbers, a back packer, a Camp 4 Rat, a true environmentalist who has a over ten year old \$11 billion State environmental program on my resume that is going strong and will continue on for years (without court involvement, I might add). My large business facilities are totally solar powered also with a 135KW system (that takes about 1000 panels).

I have not participated in the planning process in quite a while as I am totally disalloussioned by the process. We have been involved in Park planning since the very beginning, way before the flood gave people so many excuses to eliminate input.

In the beginning the process looked like it might lead to something good, then the courts were brought in to "supervise the process" much later the flood came and the wacos won and removed the river campgrounds in a classic knee jerk, heavy on the JERK, reaction (fully supported by the Park Service (light on the service part).

Now all planning is in the hands of the courts and we all know where that will go. The ultimate goal is not to make Yosemite user safe and friendly, the goal is simply the elimination of all visitors except the chosen few who feel that they are above use "normal folk" because they are true "protectors of the environment." "Fence it off" they say, close it, remove it, don't use it. This is eliteist plane and simple.

I am frustrated that I cannot camp in the Valley anymore. I want more campsites for us campers, and I want meaningful input that will not be just thrown in the round file when it is recieved.

I also wonder why so many meetings are held in San Francisco? (see my elitist comment, and follow the money) Has there ever been a meeting in Stockton? Meetings in the Yosemite Valley are great for the people who live there, but they are employees and people who have a NIMBY small town opinion of "their" park.

I want more camp sites in the valley and less people living in houses and apartments there. Where did the idea to replace the lost sites go?

Last thought, The Tuolumne River plan will succeed in eliminating most camp sites from the Meadows, what are you going to do about that? When that happens the park will become a daily drive through like the Grand Canyon or Great Smokies where the average stay is measured in minutes or hours not in days and there will be many who will want to stop that also.

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Sincerely,

David Atwater, Stockton



Bridget & Doug Kerr

06/04/2007 06:01 PM
MST

To: YOSE Planning <yose_planning@nps.gov>
cc: Elexis_Mayer@nps.gov, Kristina_Rylands@nps.gov
Subject: comments for new MRP scoping

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MRP-SEIS-04
JUN 09 2007

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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

The following concern statements, followed by two poems, are submitted as my personal scoping comments for the new Merced River Plan.

The Merced River is the life artery for Yosemite National Park . "My River" is a poem about my personal connection to the Merced River as a resident of the Merced Canyon . "A Poem About Ugly" is about the negative impact Yosemite Valley Plan projects are having on both the natural values of the Merced River and general visitor experience in Yosemite Valley . A protective and legally valid Merced River Plan should be the programmatic foundation for a large scale implementation plan like the YVP. However, as a member of two environmental organizations who follow the YVP planning processes closely, I have found the exact opposite to be true . There is an undeniable ugliness brought about by the fact that the YVP is still driving park projects, even while it has been openly acknowledged by park staff that there are serious problems with major portions of the current YVP . I realize that it is unusual for poetry to be submitted for NEPA comments but desperate times call for desperate measures.

It is my hope that since it has now been 20 years since the Merced was designated Wild and Scenic, and being that this is your agency's third attempt at producing a Merced River plan, my comments will help produce a protective and legally valid plan . It is my sincere hope that members of your agency will seriously consider the following concern statements and take my poetry to heart . Thank you for the opportunity to submit, as an individual, scoping comments for a "new" MRP planning process.

Sincerely,

Bridget Kerr

20 year resident of El Portal, CA

NPS should not proceed with Yosemite Valley Plan projects until a protective Merced River Plan is sincerely developed and legally in place; NPS should re -visit the YVP before implementing its projects.

NPS should communicate respectfully and productively with interested stakeholders in all park planning efforts rather than viewing informed critics as the enemy (this includes local grassroots and national environmental groups, all concerned Native American groups, even those not previously consulted in park planning efforts, and well -informed recreation groups).

NPS should clearly define "ecological restoration" in the draft and final EIS.

NPS should clearly define "development" in the draft and final EIS.

NPS should make all public comments related to this planning process easily available for citizens to view on the NPS website.

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p. 286

NPS should make draft alternatives available for public comment .

NPS should develop the draft and final EIS to be no larger than one volume, and intelligible to the general public.

NPS should include all tributaries of the Merced River within designated river boundaries .

NPS should take a serious look at a fresh approach to zoning /management prescriptions within the Merced River corridor boundaries.

NPS should conduct soundscape studies and include findings for each segment of the Merced River in the EIS.

NPS should conduct rare plant studies for the entire Merced River corridor and include findings in the EIS.

NPS should do a complete biological inventory of the Merced River corridor as part of this planning process and include at least a condensed version of this inventory in the EIS .

NPS should conduct air quality studies for the entire Merced River corridor and include findings in the EIS.

NPS should reconsider appropriateness of the High Sierra Camps in YNP, in general, and their impacts on the Merced River, specifically, in this planning process .

NPS should study High Sierra Camp stock use in relation to water quality, visitor experience for hikers, and trail maintenance costs and include these findings in the EIS .

NPS should more thoroughly monitor water quality in the Merced River and its tributaries (above and beyond current data gathering under VERP framework).

NPS should make every effort to allow families to participate in resource -based, low-cost, low-amenity activities in the Merced River corridor (such as picnicking, tent and traditional auto-camping, rafting with their own rafts, sledding with their own snow devices, riding their own bicycles).

NPS should consider more seriously the impacts of concession rafting on the Merced River in Yosemite Valley.

NPS should consider more seriously the impacts of concession bike rentals on the Merced River and its related meadows in Yosemite Valley.

NPS should identify swimming as a recreational ORV for all segments of the Merced River .

NPS should zone community swimming holes in El Portal (such as Patty's Hole) for appropriate recreation and cultural activities (such as swimming, lawful fishing, and Native American gathering) rather than for maximum possible impact /development.

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P. 304

NPS should consider the findings of the SNEP Report in this planning process, especially regarding the El Portal segment.

NPS should develop a "scenic" category for El Portal ORVs.

NPS should have and make available to the public accurate and up -to-date maps of wetlands in El Portal.

NPS should zone all wetlands in El Portal for maximum protection rather than for high visitor use .

NPS should re-consider having a bulk fuel facility such as Odger's Petroleum next to the Merced River in the El Portal segment.

NPS should identify and zone accordingly for Native American cultural ORVs within the entire river corridor; this type of zoning could offer maximum protection from ground disturbing projects while allowing for true ecological restoration AND respectful access /Native American traditional use.

NPS should re-consider the "historical" status and significance of some structures in YNP that may no longer be appropriate to the NPS mission or cost -effective to maintain.

NPS should protect wetlands and other riparian areas along the Merced River in the western portion of Yosemite Valley from any increase in impermeable surfaces (additional asphalt and concrete).

My River

Aloof emerald falling

easy over smooth granite,

you could help

the most tired ghost

rise, blessing the earth.

You remind me

I have an energy that shocks.

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P. 4074

Dropping beyond what I know,
you form gorges and canyons and valleys
of many places to rest.

You remind me
I have a weight upon my shoulders.

A blackbird wings up; red and yellow
bands flashing; liquid song
growing; canyon wrens whistle
their descending scale
against metamorphic walls; flowing
shushing willows.

You remind me
to forget.

A Poem About Ugly

You may wonder why I choose

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p. 504

to clamber on top of a dumpster
to see the construction, rather than,
admiring the autumn
trickle of Yosemite Falls, lingering
at red and yellow brightness of Indian hemp
along meadow edges or hiking the southside trail
to view turning maples against granite;
I wonder why myself.

I think I am drawn to the orange fencing and noise
because I want to witness, want you to witness
the ugly; sometimes we must.

Over the fence, a rushed project
the size of a city subdivision,
27 future buildings—desecrating the temple:
petroleum fuels mixed with the scent of freshly exposed earth
concrete poured pads and hammers framing where
black oaks and boulders once bothered no one
and were home to many.

Just how much are we expected to endure
in the name of restoring
this Valley? Just what are we bringing back?

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P. 6 of 4

How many decibels, for how many years,

should be allowed

for diesel machinery, back-up beeping?

How much sewer gas and tour bus fumes

can one be expected to tolerate?

How many contractors in king cabs

must zoom importantly between

multiple job sites before we ask

if something might be wrong in our national park?

Some say that we must be patient

with the ugly

because in 10-20 years

we will all leave our cars and have a quiet place

perfectly hardened,

encased in cement and asphalt

for all to enjoy.

--
Bridget McGinniss Kerr

