



Draft Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Tuolumne River

Tuolumne River Corridor Ecologic Values

From the alpine headwaters of the Tuolumne River, through the river's steep descent into the Sierra Nevada foothills, interactions among geologic, hydrologic, and biologic processes sustain a rare diversity of robust, interrelated, and largely intact ecosystems. The entire river corridor is either within or surrounded by designated Wilderness, which protects the ecological integrity of these systems.



Photo courtesy of Marea Ortiz

Hydrologic Values

Largely intact hydrologic processes in the Tuolumne River corridor create a diversity of exceptional hydrologic features and contribute to the integrity of river-related ecosystems.



Photo courtesy of Harold Poskanzer

Geologic Values

The Tuolumne River corridor represents one of the most extensive examples of stairstep river morphology in the Sierra Nevada. This glacially carved morphology extends over an unusually long gradient from the headwaters of the river to the lower elevations at the western park boundary. Exceptionally well-preserved geologic features provide some of the best evidence of glacial processes in the entire Sierra Nevada.



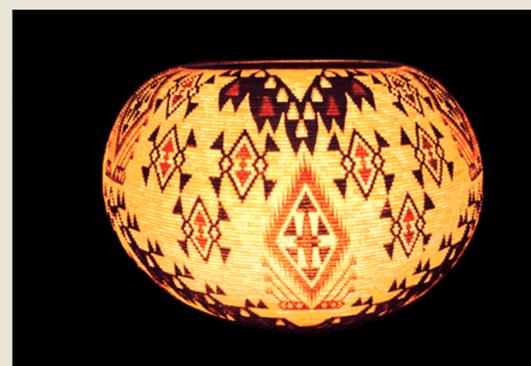
Photo courtesy of PDPhoto.org

Biologic Values

The robust, interrelated, and largely intact ecosystems along the Tuolumne River corridor provide habitat for a remarkable diversity of native plants and animals, including special-status species.

Tuolumne River Corridor Sociocultural Values

The Tuolumne River's unique combination of prehistoric, historic, scenic, and recreational values distinguishes it from other rivers in the Sierra Nevada and throughout the nation. The sociocultural values of the Tuolumne River corridor extend back at least 6,000 years and span generations of diverse groups of people. Visible evidence testifies to the evolving importance of the river corridor as a seasonal hunting and gathering ground, a trans-Sierra trade and travel route, a destination for recreation and leisure, and a place to connect with nature in a wilderness setting.



NPS Photo

Prehistoric and American Indian Cultural Values

The Tuolumne River corridor contains prehistoric archeological sites with regionally significant research potential that makes them eligible or potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Certain prehistoric resources within the corridor are important for maintaining cultural traditions among groups of American Indian people affiliated with the Tuolumne River.



Photo courtesy of J. Colleen Brown

Scenic Values

A glacially carved, snow-capped landscape, through which the Tuolumne River alternately meanders across wide meadows and cascades down steep canyons, creates magnificent scenery with a unique character that people equate with Tuolumne River corridor.

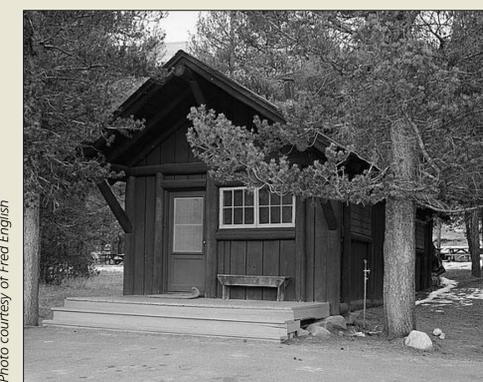


Photo courtesy of Fred English

Historic Values

The Tuolumne River corridor contains numerous sites that are listed (or eligible or potentially eligible for listing) on the National Register of Historic Places as places of regional or national significance.

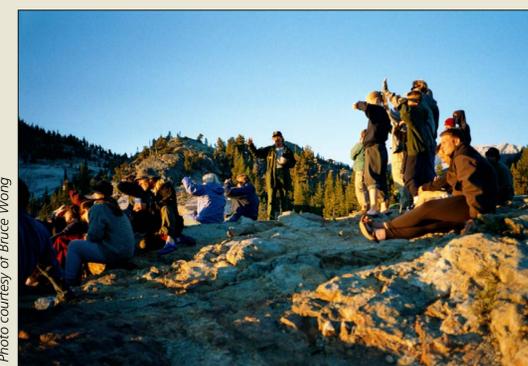


Photo courtesy of Bruce Wong

Recreational Values

The untrammled character of the river corridor, most of which is in designated Wilderness, provides outstanding opportunities for a diversity of experiences characterized by primitive, unconfined recreation in a landscape dominated by natural scenery and soundscapes.