



Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River

In 1984, 83 miles of the Tuolumne River were added to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System by Congress with an amendment to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This included 54 miles of the river within Yosemite National Park. In accordance with the law, the NPS will prepare a comprehensive plan to establish the long-term guidance for protecting the portion of the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River that flows through Yosemite National Park.

The Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River originates in the high country of Yosemite National Park near the eastern entrance at Tioga Pass. The two principal sources include the 8-mile long Dana Fork which forms near the base of Mt. Dana, and the 13-mile long Lyell Fork which forms at the base of the glacier on Mt. Lyell.

The two forks merge near the eastern edge of Tuolumne Meadows, the largest sub-alpine meadow in the Sierra Nevada. After flowing 3 miles through Tuolumne Meadows, the river cascades for nearly 24 miles through the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne.



Tuolumne River in Tuolumne Meadows

The Wild and Scenic River designation in Yosemite National Park breaks at the point where the river enters the 8-mile long Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, created by the O'Shaughnessy Dam. Downriver from the dam, the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River resumes, flowing another 6 miles through the Poopenaut Valley to the park's western boundary. Outside of Yosemite National Park, the remaining segments of the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

What makes the Tuolumne River special?

The Tuolumne is rich in what the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act calls *outstandingly remarkable values*. In addition to its exceptional water quality and largely free-flowing condition, the Tuolumne River stands apart from all other rivers in the nation due to its vast range of biologic, geologic, historic and prehistoric, as well as scenic and recreational values. These include:

- Some of the most extensive subalpine meadow and riparian communities in the Sierra Nevada
- Textbook examples of glacially carved stairstep river morphology
- The archeological landscape of the prehistoric past and places important to the ancestral heritage and ongoing cultural traditions of contemporary American Indian tribes.
- Parsons Memorial Lodge, a national historic landmark, which commemorates the significance of the river in inspiring conservation activism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries
- Magnificent scenery, offering views from the river of lush meadows, meandering river views backed by rugged mountain peaks and glacially carved domes, and dramatic cascades and hanging valleys
- Outstanding opportunities for a diversity of wilderness-oriented recreational experiences dominated by dramatic scenery, the sounds of nature, and opportunities for relative solitude

What is the Tuolumne River Plan?

In keeping with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the National Park Service is preparing a comprehensive management plan for the segments of the Tuolumne River corridor within Yosemite National Park.

When completed, this document will guide future management to protect and enhance the river's outstandingly remarkable values, its water quality and free-flowing condition. The plan will also determine more specifically the programs and activities needed to meet river protection goals in Tuolumne Meadows and throughout the river corridor.



To achieve this, the Tuolumne River Plan will:

- Describe the existing resource conditions including a description of the outstandingly remarkable values, water quality, and the river's free-flowing condition
- Define the goals and objectives for protecting river values
- Address development of lands and facilities
- Address user capacities by identifying the appropriate kinds and amounts of use that protect river values
- Address water quality issues and instream flow requirements
- Reflect a collaborative approach with all stakeholders
- Identify regulatory authorities of other governmental agencies that assist in protecting river

Draft Plan Available in 2012

Look for the release of the draft plan in 2012, along with public meetings, field visits, and opportunities to provide comments. To learn more, visit online:

www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/trp.htm