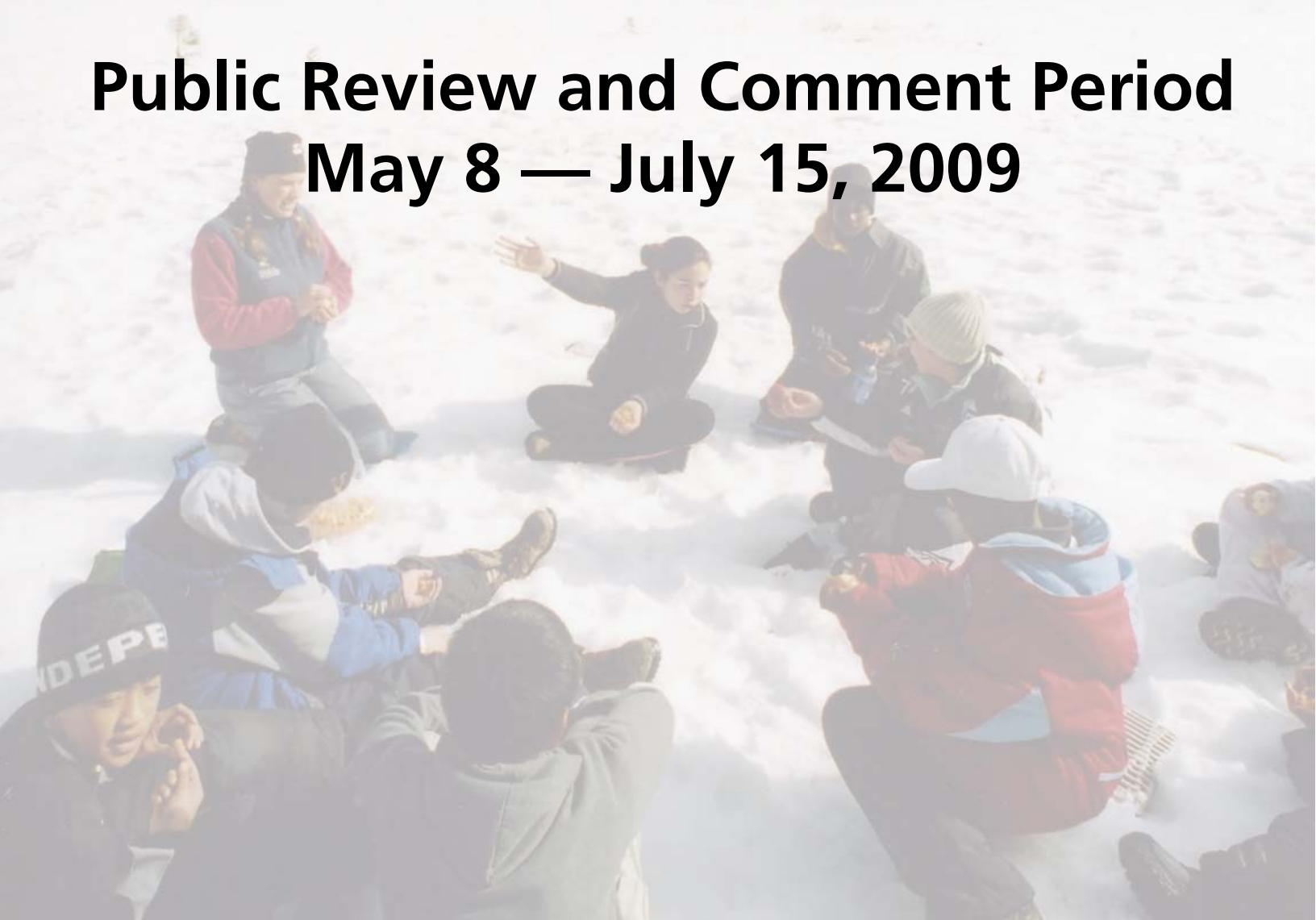




Participant Guide

to the
Yosemite Institute
Environmental Education Campus
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Public Review and Comment Period
May 8 — July 15, 2009



Yosemite National Park and Yosemite Institute partner to provide high-quality environmental education & interpretation.

National Parks provide ideal locations for resource-based environmental education. Yosemite National Park and Yosemite Institute (YI) have partnered since 1971, providing field science education to a diverse young audience. Each year, more than 13,000 students and teachers come to Yosemite to experience curriculum-based programs offered by YI. These experiences inspire a sense of place, create opportunities for stewardship of public lands, and plant the seeds for development of a life-long conservation ethic.

Why is there a need for a new Environmental Education Campus?

For over 35 years YI has based its environmental education program at the Crane Flat campus (see map below). Most of the NPS-owned structures and utilities are more than 60 years old, not designed for educational purposes, and are energy inefficient and difficult to retrofit to achieve modern standards for health, safety, and accessibility. In addition, the Crane Flat campus can accommodate only a fraction of the students served in the program; the remainder (a majority) must be based elsewhere in or near the park, in commercial lodging facilities at added expense. These additional expenses limit the number of scholarships available to underserved student populations.



What are the project goals?

- ◆ Provide an environmental education campus that better serves the combined missions of Yosemite National Park and Yosemite Institute
- ◆ Facilitate multi-day educational programs that complement California State Standards and offer opportunities for research and study of the natural world
- ◆ Create a sustainable, ecologically sensitive, campus that protects park resources and attains standards for national Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)
- ◆ Provide a safe and universally accessible campus that meets modern health and safety standards
- ◆ Nurture the development of future stewards of our National Parks and the environment

What Alternatives have been explored and developed?

The alternatives summarized below represent different options for achieving the project's goals. These alternatives include ideas from the public who have participated in an extensive five-year alternatives development and refinement process.

Alternative 1: No Action



- ◆ YI programs, necessary maintenance, and repairs would continue, but no major improvements to utilities or construction of new buildings would occur.
- ◆ No change in the overnight lodging capacity (76 students and 8 staff) would occur at Crane Flat; the majority of students (about 100) would continue to rely upon commercial lodging in Yosemite Valley or outside the park.
- ◆ No major improvements would be made to create a more sustainable energy- or water-efficient facility. Maintenance staff would continue to face challenges of retrofitting older structures and utilities, attempting to meet modern standards for health, safety, and accessibility.

Alternative 2: Redevelop Crane Flat



- ◆ Crane Flat campus would be redesigned and enlarged to accommodate approximately 100 more students (with chaperones, teachers, and staff). The new campus would achieve modern standards for health, safety, and accessibility.
- ◆ Most campus buildings (including two historic structures) would be removed and replaced with new sustainable, energy-efficient facilities.
- ◆ Well-water use would be closely regulated to maintain essential levels in surrounding meadows; water would be hauled from off-site during low water periods.
- ◆ YI programs and operations would continue to be focused in and around sensitive Crane Flat meadows (with mitigation measures to protect resources).

Alternative 3: Heness Ridge campus, (NPS-preferred)



- ◆ Yosemite Institute would relocate programs and operations to a new upland campus that would be constructed at Henness Ridge; YI programs would discontinue in and around sensitive meadows at Crane Flat.
- ◆ The Crane Flat campus site would be restored to natural forest/ meadow conditions. All existing campus structures (including 4 historic buildings, utilities, and parking) would be removed; the site would be reseeded.
- ◆ A new campus would accommodate up to 224 students per session (w/chaperones, teachers, and essential staff), reducing the number of students relying upon commercial lodging in Yosemite Valley by about 100.
- ◆ On-site utilities would be developed (water storage, a solar array, and wastewater treatment). A Chinquapin drinking water treatment system would provide potable water to the visitor comfort station and campus.
- ◆ The campus would be universally accessible and meet all fire, health and safety standards. A new fire station would serve the campus and improve response time for visitor areas and communities between Yosemite Valley and Wawona.

May 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	We	Thu	Fri	Sat
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31						

Open House & Site Visits at Crane Flat and Henness Ridge from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Public meeting at Mariposa County Government Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers; from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

June 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Open House & Site Visits at Crane Flat and Henness Ridge from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Public Meeting at Fort Mason, GGNRA from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Public Review & Comment Period: May 8 — July 15, 2009

Why is commenting important?

Although the NPS has expertise in Yosemite, it would be impossible to know all the issues of importance to visitors and those with special ties to that area—this wealth of knowledge and input comes from the visitors themselves. Park plans are enriched by contributions of ideas from the public...*one comment can make a difference!*

When can I talk to park staff in person about the DEIS?

The public review and comment period **for the DEIS is open from May 8, 2009** through July 15, 2009. **Public Open Houses with site visits will be held in Yosemite on May 27 and June 24, 2009 from 1-4 pm (call 209-379-1365 for details).** Public meetings will also be held on May 28, 2009 at the Mariposa County Government Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers from 4-7pm and at Fort Mason, Golden Gate National Recreation Area on June 17, 2009 from 4- 8 pm. Park staff will be available to discuss the plan, answer questions, and accept comments.

How can I get a copy of the DEIS and submit my written comments?

Copies of the document can be obtained in person at public meetings or on the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/eecampus.htm>

Comments must be submitted in writing using one of the following means::

By email to: yose_planning@nps.gov

By fax to: (209)379-1294

By mail to: Superintendent, Attn: YIEEC DEIS, PO Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389