



# Analysis of Public Comment

**CAT**  
Content  
Analysis  
Team

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## Yosemite National Park

### Environmental Education Campus Plan - Scoping

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**National Park Service**  
**Yosemite National Park**



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# Introduction

Yosemite National Park was created in 1890 to preserve the spectacular scenery, forests, meadows and waterfalls found in this part of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of southern California. The Park is administered by the National Park Service and attracts visitors from around the world.

Yosemite's General Management Plan was completed in 1980 and addressed the needs for visitor services, resource management, interpretive services, concession operations and park operations. The Yosemite Valley Plan, finalized in 2000, aims to carry out the goals of the General Management Plan and restore Yosemite Valley's natural processes.

In the fall of 2002, Yosemite National Park began public scoping in preparation for the Environmental Impact Statement for the Environmental Education Campus Development Program. The Park Service invited the public to submit ideas and concerns pertaining the proposed design and construction of the Environmental Education Campus.

During the comment period 58 responses were received through written correspondence. This report, developed by the U.S. Forest Service Content Analysis Team and based on a review of all received responses, provides a comprehensive list of public concerns raised during the comment period. The public concern list identifies specific requests and common themes expressed by individuals and groups. Each public concern is accompanied by one or more illustrative sample statements. Sample statements support the public concerns, and may also impart the author's suggestion(s) on how, when, or where the concern should be addressed. Moreover, it should be noted that sample statements are just that—samples. A given public concern may reflect one or many submitted comments. In addition, this report provides a series of appendices that explain the process for reviewing public comments, analyze demographic information, and list the names of the analysts.

# Public Concerns List

## Planning

### **#29 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should consider all public comment.**

Please consider all comments so you can make an informed choice. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #41)

### **#31 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should ensure its staff is made aware of public forums.**

Today's "public" forum wasn't very public. When I came into the park September 15 and asked about this "public" forum, no one in the visitor center knew anything about it. The ranger got on the phone and made several calls before he got in touch with someone that could confirm that there was a forum planned. He immediately posted info that day. My question is: How can this be a public forum when you haven't provided info even to your own staff? (Individual, Long Beach, CA - #26)

### **#18 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should include alternatives that preserve Yosemite National Park's natural environment.**

We request that the Park develop and select alternatives that preserve or enhance the natural ecosystems of Yosemite Valley. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Twain Harte, CA - #33)

The Yosemite Valley Plan and the Environmental Education Campus Development center expansion alternative will degrade the natural values of Yosemite: Any alternative in the draft Environmental Education Campus Development Center which allows for an increase in the size of the Crane Flat Campus—by numbers and/or by footprint will demonstrate the failure of the Yosemite Valley Plan to protect the health of the ecosystems and hydrology of Yosemite National Park and the health, survivability, ability to reproduce, and future sustainability of the flora and fauna which depend on them. It must also be remembered that the wilderness boundary is nearby and must be respected and the wilderness values protected. (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #50)

### **#19 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should consider integrating the Yosemite Institute into the Yosemite Lodge Plan, rather than building new facilities.**

A possible option would be allocating Yosemite Institute a specific section of the new Yosemite Lodge Project. The YI program could continue to function as it currently does with a portion of its students at Crane Flat and the rest in Yosemite Valley. The Institute could house the students in a block of economical cabin/motel-like facilities, all concentrated in one area of the Yosemite Lodge during the fall, winter, and spring. Those facilities could then be opened up to the general public for the busiest season of the year, the summer. Students could eat at the lodge cafeteria instead of Curry Village. This would require no new developments to be built anywhere else within or outside of Yosemite National Park. YI would be guaranteed the use of those facilities at a set rate negotiated with the NPS so as to avoid being "priced out" of the valley. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #44)

### **#20 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should adopt the Environmental Education Campus Plan because it conforms with the Yosemite Valley and Merced River Plans.**

I find acceptable all proposed projects listed in the September 20, 2002 letter regarding the opening of public scoping, as they meet the terms of the Yosemite and Merced River Plans. (Individual, No Address - #31)

**#21 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should disclose how the Environmental Education Campus Plan modifies the General Management Plan.**

Nowhere on the NPS web site, Yosemite Park planning site sheets, nor in the YVP does it disclose that this proposal would be a significant amendment to the park's general management plan. (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #49)

**#22 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should disclose the cumulative impacts of the Environmental Education Campus Plan.**

This project is barely disclosed in the Yosemite Valley Plan, yet it will create significant cumulative impacts—none of which were disclosed in the YVP. (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #49)

The brief, un-descriptive paragraph in the YVP does not disclose that this will be an expansion in numbers served and in footprint. It merely mentions that, "among the expanded facilities would be a science lab..." It does not disclose the many cumulative impacts at all and, e.g., does not mention the Great Gray Owl. . . . What good does it do to study and interpret such values when in order to do this, those very values are put at risk and destroyed? For example, the program might teach or interpret, "This was an area that used to support Great Gray Owls, but the development of these structures and the implementation of this program in 2004 served to disturb to destroy the environment which used to support them. They are no longer here." (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

**#23 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should complete an Environmental Impact Statement for the Environmental Education Campus Plan based on the Merced River Plan.**

The YVP should be based on a protective Merced River Plan. A full EIS should be completed for this plan after the YVP is in compliance with a protective Merced River Plan. (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #49)

**#26 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should prepare a single Draft EIS that evaluates the cumulative impacts of the Environmental Education Campus, Yosemite Lodge Area, Curry Village/East Valley Campground, South Fork Bridge, and El Portal Office Building plans.**

I am very concerned that NPS is violating the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulation which implements the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). CEQ, in section 150.4(a) states, "Proposals or parts of proposals which are related to each other closely enough to be, in effect, a single course of action shall be evaluated in a single impact statement." (Individual, Houston, TX - #30)

**#27 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should disclose the financial arrangements between the Yosemite Institute and Yosemite National Park.**

Monetary incentives: Does NPS get a kick-back from YI expansion (i.e., do additional revenue opportunities for YI also mean increased revenue sharing with the NPS?) from YI additional outside rentals? Does NPS have a monetary incentive for YI and/or Crane Flat Campus expansion? (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

## Alternatives

**#98 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should give fair consideration to each alternative set forth in the Environmental Education Campus Plan.**

Alternatives—are these merely to make a show of satisfying the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)? Has a predetermination already been made to keep the campus at Crane Flat and expand it—as on the schematic on the board at one of the NPS open Houses at the East Auditorium, Yosemite Valley Visitor Center? (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

Alternatives need equal consideration in the decision making process with NEPA, and YNI Board.  
(Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #4)

**#32 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should select the No Action Alternative for the Environmental Education Campus Plan.**

Crane Flat ranks as an average facility in an extraordinary, nay, stupendous locale. To build more there seems antithetical to the stated purpose of the organization. Therefore, I support the No Action alternative.  
(Individual, Santa Cruz, CA - #25)

## Wetlands

**#44 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should consider the impacts to nearby meadows from redeveloping the Crane Flat campus.**

What are the important issues and opportunities to consider as Yosemite Institute and the National Park Service move forward with the project to redevelop the Crane Flat Campus? Spring Meadow sensitivity in additional people, possibility of soil compaction. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #4)

I strongly support Yosemite Institute, a unit of the Yosemite National Institute, in its mission of environmental education. With respect to the proposed reconstruction and/or expansion of the present campus due to aging of the current structures and the increased maintenance costs associated with same, please do not permit any impacts that could result in further drainage or reduction of the Crane Flat meadow and its water table. (Individual, Citrus Heights, CA - #48)

**#43 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should test for any reduction in groundwater before drilling new wells in the Crane Flat area.**

Larger facility drawing down the meadow aquifer, affecting flora, etc. Subterranean water flow is a mysterious thing (look at helitack's need for a 600 foot deep well!); is there a chance that increased water withdrawals from the meadow wells will actually reduce groundwater that supplies the sequoia grove? Can you test for this before the facility is committed to and new wells are drilled? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

## Vegetation

**#47 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should consider monitoring the Environmental Education Campus's impacts on the Crane Flat ecosystem.**

Pristine meadows and forests, how are you monitoring the health, well-being of the life living at Crane Flat with added people/development? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #41)

**#46 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should consider the impacts to the Tuolumne Sequoia Grove from increasing the student population at Crane Flat.**

What are the important issues and opportunities to consider as Yosemite Institute and the National Park Service move forward with the project to redevelop the Crane Flat Campus? Soil compaction and Giant Sequoia shallow root systems are vulnerable to additional hiking groups. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #4)

Areas of concern that need solid research if expansion occurs: Fragile shallow root system of giant sequoias, current use with 4-6 hiking groups on existing trails is a maximum number without impacting the grove, and soil surface. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #41)

The proximate location of the Crane Flat campus to the Tuolumne giant sequoia grove indicates increased impacts from doubling the student population at Crane Flat. (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #49)

**#105 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should address the fate of the Giant Sequoias planted near the old Crane Flat Ranger Station.**

What becomes of the three sequoias planted [near the old Crane Flat Ranger Station] historically? This was Muir's first stop on his first trip into the park; he found a landscape with sandhill cranes and one small cabin. What have we allowed ourselves to give up since Muir's time, and are we burying it further? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

## Wildlife

**#53 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should minimize the educational facility's impacts to wildlife.**

You need to select the location in Yosemite Park where the education facilities will have the least impact on wildlife. That should be job one. I don't think we should compromise sensitive wildlife like the Great Gray Owl in order to have good educational facilities. We need good educational facilities, but the appropriate place for them must be found. (Individual, Ben Lomond, CA - #55)

Displaced wildlife from extra noise and disturbance. How to minimize the effects on this resource? . . . Increased traffic (noise, parking challenges, wildlife by vehicles). How is this impact mitigated? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#50 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should address nocturnal wildlife impacts from increased campus lighting.**

Increased night lighting—effects on crepuscular/nocturnal wildlife? As it is, lights at the current campus shine all the way across the main meadow, which can't be good for the resource of night. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#49 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should assess the impact to neotropical bird migration patterns from redeveloping the Crane Flat campus.**

What are the important issues and opportunities to consider as Yosemite Institute and the National Park Service move forward with the project to redevelop the Crane Flat Campus? Neotropical bird migration stop-over site in Dog's Meadow. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #4)

**#52 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should address how to restore rare amphibian species.**

Rare amphibians. Seasonal wetlands may, or could, harbor species of value. Mountain yellow-legged frogs? Threats to extant Pacific Tree Frogs from new run-off, more kids? Any chance that the tiny wetlands beside the campus could be a reintroduction site for species of concern? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

## Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

**#54 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should disclose possible effects on listed species from the redevelopment of Crane Flat.**

What are the important issues and opportunities to consider as Yosemite Institute and the National Park Service move forward with the project to redevelop the Crane Flat Campus? Endangered Species - Pacific Fisher, S. Spotted Owl, Gray Owl, and Plant Species! (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #4)

### BAT SPECIES

Yosemite is habitat for many federal and state listed bat species. We can well imagine that the Crane Flat area is habitat for many of these species containing meadow and woodland interfaces. The historic buildings that NPS and YI propose to tear down undoubtedly provide roosting sites for many bats. Even if the buildings are torn down outside of roosting time frames, can NPS ensure that the bats will find suitable new sites in the same approximate areas? There are probably other sensitive species that also depend on the habitat and attributes of the Crane Flat area which would be negatively affected by this proposal. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

### GREAT GRAY OWL

I consider the meadow system to be of great importance as a home for breeding Great Gray Owls and as a migration stopping place. The impact an expanded campus could have on the meadow may mean the end of owl breeding in that area. (Individual, No Address - #2)

The entire YI campus is within the potential nesting area (as judged by proximity to the meadow foraging areas) of the Great Gray Owl. More people, noise, etc., in this important habitat for the Great Gray Owl can only diminish the foraging success of the owl, which will ultimately lead to a decline in the nesting success of the owl. (Individual, El Portal, CA - #46)

Great Gray Owls will be further impacted by any expansion in numbers and/or footprint at the Crane Flat Campus. The Great Gray Owl is very rare south of Canada and is listed as an Endangered California species. There are only around 75 owls in the entire state of CA. "Entire California population of this species is restricted to the Yosemite region," "Research suggests that human disturbance, could affect foraging success of this species, which may explain its absence from the [Yosemite] Valley." (YVP, K-25) They probably exist at all due to the existence of the Park, yet the Park proposes to impact and probably cause the demise of some or many of them, and their ability to reproduce, through this expansion at Crane Flat. Some or many of them use and probably depend on the Crane Flat area. (How ironic would it be for a children's environmental education organization to be the cause of the degradation of Yosemite's natural values and the death of Great Gray Owls and elimination of the owls' future generations.) (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #49)

Great Gray Owl habitat. Marginal nesting habitat, because of human disturbance (opening the Tioga Road, increased traffic, opening Crane Flat Campground—in the middle of breeding season), yet used every year for breeding. The sustainability of this state endangered species presence in the region has already been compromised by the expansion of Crane Flat gas station operations with 24-hour service, 12-month service, and new, louder generator and compressor. Shouldn't the park be doing whatever it can to protect this bird's habitat? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

### WOLVERINES

There may be wolverines using the area between Crane Flat and Gin Flat, as well; very rare and sensitive to disturbance. Has anyone looked for their tracks in the area in winter, and how will growth at Crane Flat impact them? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

### FISHERS

"Fishers [Pacific fisher, *Martes pennanti pacifica*] have been seen within the last 10 years near Henness Ridge and Crane Flat." (YVP K-27) In fact in the last year, a Fisher was unexpectedly seen near the Crane Flat Campus. They are a Federal and California Species of Concern. All the more reason not to increase impacts at Crane Flat and potentially impact this unexpected good indication of their presence. Densities in the central Sierra Nevada where Yosemite is located are very low. (YVP K-27) (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

Fisher habitat. Tracks are seen at the Crane Flat BRC each winter; this area is one of the few places in the Yosemite region where fishers seem to have a regular population. Have park biologists done winter track studies? How will program growth here affect these sensitive animals? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

## Cultural Resources

### **#55 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should implement the Environmental Education Campus Plan to promote valuable Yosemite Institute courses.**

I am writing to encourage your support of a new Yosemite Institute campus at Crane Flat. Our school brings a group of 45-50 high school science students to Yosemite Institute every year, in February. . . . Our students learn through experiential education in the majestic setting of Yosemite National Park, where they hike, cross-country ski, and snowshoe to study sites. These students are given the opportunity to learn about science, as well as about each other. This is a program that cannot be recreated on our high school campus, and is one that would be better served by a new facility at Crane Flat. The Crane Flat area is ideal for the Yosemite Institute programs because it offers a very unique and varied environment, in a small area. (Individual, Moraga, CA - #5)

The experience the YI provides is excellent. The instructors are well educated and knowledgeable about the area. Environmental sustainability is emphasized and my students leave the trip with a profound appreciation of the world around them. For many of my students, the experience at Yosemite is the highlight of their entire high school experience. I highly recommend that the Yosemite Institute experience be able to remain and look forward to any help that I can provide to them to accommodate this. (Individual, San Clemente, CA - #10)

I am asking you and all members of the committee to consider allowing Y.I. to build new facilities at Crane Flat. This will insure the opportunity for young people to benefit from this experience will continue. (Individual, Fremont, CA - #6)

I am pleased to be able to comment on the Environmental Education Campus Development Program. This program is of lasting importance to the citizen of California and the nation. Yosemite Park and its natural and historical importance to our people are better served with this partnership and the educational programs it provides. The need for a new facility is self-evident; the need to provide a safe and healthy campus that will meet the needs of a large group of participants is long past due. (Individual, Yuba City, CA - #47)

I am a sixth grade teacher in Selma, California. Each year our school sends 90 sixth graders to the Yosemite Institute. Our kids are mostly lower socio-economic children and mostly Hispanic. Some are in "Honors" class, but most are "regular." The week-long trip to Yosemite is foundational in their young lives. It opens their minds and lives to a new world of natural water, plants, animals, weather, and ecosystems. The trip dovetails nicely with California's sixth grade science curriculum. We have been making this trip for almost 20 years, and we have seen our former students grow up and use the knowledge and experiences from Yosemite to make good decisions about the environment, camping, voting, and preserving nature. They pass these values on to their children. Y.I. is trying to expand their facilities to improve their program and make it available to more children. I am very much in favor of this expansion. (Individual, Selma, CA - #7)

I hope you realize what an incredible program YI is and you do all you can to improve upon it and make it more accessible to all students. (Individual, Redwood City, CA - #15)

### **#101 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should address the potential changes in the quality of education if programming is increased.**

What are the important issues . . . to consider as Yosemite Institute and the National Park Service move forward with the project to redevelop the Crane Flat Campus? Quality of education if programming is increased. (Individual, No Address - #3)

### **#100 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should encourage the Yosemite Institute to pursue alternative partnerships and educational programs to minimize infrastructure development.**

It's worth thinking about a housing facility that'd host a couple dozen high school juniors in a semester-length credit program that focuses on the values of national parks and wilderness. A small dormitory, with

a bit of classroom space could be added to the existing 76-bed campus, and there'd be a large increase in the depth of education about park concerns. A semester-long course would have profound effects on those learners, would grow YI away from YCS, wouldn't need much infrastructure. If YI were better endowed, it could start an operation that focused attention on the great number of schools that visit Yosemite for a day, or that camp for a few days, but which have little or no contact with the NPS or any local interpretive services. Here is a major need and opportunity to improve resource based education in/about Yosemite. Though it's beyond YOSE, having YI grow at SEKI provides a way to reach more young people with the national park message, without impairing Yosemite's resources. Rather than partnering with YCS, YNI could expand their partnership to DNC, work an arrangement, with NPS support, for affordability, safety and reliability. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#102 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should clarify Yosemite Institute's role within Yosemite National Park.**

What are the important issues and opportunities to consider as Yosemite Institute and the National Park Service move forward with the project to redevelop the Crane Flat Campus? What role is YI expected to fulfill by NPS? (Individual, No Address - #3)

**#56 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should not rely on private institutes to provide environmental education.**

It must be questioned whether it is appropriate to have a private entity, rather than a public entity, providing environmental education and interpretation at a monetary cost to children in a public land. It is a shame that the US Congress and the NPS continues to cut the NPS Ranger interpretive program (of natural and cultural Park values, not interpretation of Park development plans). If there is no "Ranger Rick" present, but instead increasing amounts of commercial "opportunities," amenities having nothing to do with Park values, costs, and fees, what does the US Congress, the National Park Service and the public think public lands are for and how are they valued? We believe there is a huge difference between public lands and values and private lands and values, and that this difference must be preserved. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

**#58 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should provide affordable environmental education.**

Demand for affordable EE: If YI gets away from the concessioner's prices (which are really NPS prices), it will still be too expensive for most California families, and NPS will continue to ignore the scores of schools that come to the park without YI (or NPS) services. This center will serve the unmet current and future needs of a limited number of people who can afford what will likely still be an expensive tuition. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

I am a teacher at Palo Alto High School and I have been bringing students to Yosemite for the past nine years to participate in the incredible program that Yosemite Institute has offered. This YI experience has become an integral part of our ninth grade interdisciplinary TEAM program. However, throughout the last several years it has been increasingly difficult for YI to accommodate our entire group. Both the cost of accommodations in the valley floor as well as the lack of meeting space to use during inclement weather and evening programs have become an ongoing logistical problem. (Individual, Palo Alto, CA - #11)

NPCA believes that redevelopment of YI's Crane Flat campus is critical to meeting the demand for high quality resource-related education and interpretation for diverse and underserved audiences. According to the Institute, each year the YI turns away deserving students due to lack of space. In addition to space limitations, the cost of an average program (one student for one week) is approximately \$311 dollars. Because of increased visitation and demand for accommodations in Yosemite Valley, the concessionaire has reduced the window for discounted rates offered to Yosemite Institute, resulting in higher tuitions. By increasing space at Crane Flat, YI can reduce dependency on the concessionaire, reduce operational expenses, and provide higher quality services within Yosemite National Park. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Oakland, CA - #52)

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**#82 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should not promote the Environmental Education Campus Plan on the assumption that high lodging costs would be reduced and thereby student diversity would increase.**

Too much is made of the cost of concessionaire lodging in this equation. It is a stretch to propose that the redevelopment of the existing campus would insure diversity. If cost is so important to insure diversity and ultimately meet Yosemite's goals and partner goals, the NPS could easily control lodging availability and pricing to insure student diversity. This would not necessitate increasing development at Crane Flat or numbers of visitors in the area. If Yosemite Valley concessionaire lodging prices are fair enough to encourage diversity of the visiting public, then shouldn't it be acceptable to insure diversity of the YI students? (Individual, El Portal, CA - #46)

**#35 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should allow only children's educational groups to use the Environmental Education Campus facilities.**

Meetings, seminars, conferences, colloquiums: An additional wrinkle to this development is the ongoing and presumably future increase in accommodation of meetings and seminars of other groups. In the past, groups other than YI have held meetings or conferences at Crane Flat. We believe that it is appropriate for a children's educational group such as YI to educate the children about Yosemite on-site, as its value is as a hands-on site-based experience; however, groups, whether their subject is Yosemite or not, should not be meeting in Yosemite to discuss Yosemite or its values, and therefore unnecessarily negatively impact Yosemite by being there. Those groups should more appropriately meet in cities where meeting facilities abound for such purposes. (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #49)

**#76 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should include a comprehensive Development Concept Plan for the Crane Flat area.**

Crane Flat has been plagued with "piece-meal" development because there is no comprehensive Design Plan for the Crane Flat area. Cumulative impacts of development cannot be assessed adequately if the future development and uses of the Crane Flat are left to "piece-meal" development. For example, within the last 12 years, the following incremental changes have taken place at Crane Flat: A) Closure of the Tuolumne Grove Road—increased visitor use at the Tuolumne Grove parking lot, more use in the meadow, more impacts on Great Gray Owl habitat, more need for waste water treatment (new vault toilet building) at the parking lot. B) Conversion of the gas station, from a seasonal operation with a seasonal generator for electricity, to a full year operation with a full time generator. There are a lot more visitors around the gas station and adjacent meadow areas. The generator runs full time. Also, there was a new building constructed for ground water remediation. C) Increased use of the Crane Flat Heliport in routing parking operations. Crane Flat Lookout has expanded both the helipads as well as a new Flight Operations Building, a well house/chlorinator building, new vault toilet, and new leach field and water well. More expansion of the heliport is planned. FMO would like to put a housing area at the Lookout! Increased helicopter use that is relatively low has to have an effect on Great Gray Owls as well as be disturbing to visitors. D) YCC [Yosemite Conservation Corps] camp at the old CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camp. (Individual, El Portal, CA - #46)

Despite any benefits to a valuable program like YI, is more development here, in the absence of an area Development Concept Plan, appropriate to the protection of the park's core values? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#60 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should improve the deteriorated Yosemite Institute facilities.**

The existing facilities at Crane Flat are clearly degraded, and I wholeheartedly support the Park Service's goal to provide an interpretive program of high quality, in a safe, modern, uncrowded, and attractive facility. The only way I see this possible is to redevelop and expand the existing facility. I have personally witnessed accidents and "close calls" among students due to inadequate facilities and old, worn out infrastructure, and I am hopeful that the Park Service will approve a plan to modernize and expand the campus in the interests of student safety. While I am sure there are other projects within the Park in need of

equal if not greater attention, my feeling is that the positive experience a young person has while on an outdoor education trip goes a long way to creating attitudes and values that will shape that person's life and affect indirectly, in a beneficial way, the future of all of our national parks. As it is, a visit to the campus now does not leave a positive impression as far as basic accommodations are concerned. (Individual, No Address - #21)

The current campus is in dire need of reconstruction. The bathhouse and dining room floors are slanted and weakening with age. The kitchen walls have so many open spaces in them that controlling rodent entry is a daily challenge. During heavy rainfall and harsh snowfall, there is inadequate space to allow instructors to teach their students in warm, dry places because the dining room is so small and the bunk houses are not designed to allow group activities to be conducted in their common spaces. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #44)

Yosemite National Park assigned YI existing buildings at Crane Flat for overnight accommodations for school groups, staff housing and office space in the early 1970s. Most facilities, including dorms, our buildings and the septic system, toilets, dining room, and kitchen were built in the 1930s require substantial year-round maintenance. The septic system and toilets are in need of constant repair and present health and safety concerns for both students and faculty. The time is right to remove these outdated and unsafe facilities and build clean, low-impact, energy efficient infrastructure to house education and research for the park. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Oakland, CA - #52)

**#57 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should not develop new facilities for the Yosemite Institute.**

YI does not need a new campus. YI is the last organization that should ask for more development in the Park. YI should stand up for the integrity of the ecosystem, not build to make more money. (Individual, Santa Cruz, CA - #25)

**#70 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should consider the benefits of a smaller campus for the Yosemite Institute.**

We need to consider the impact of a "small campus" as a way to help students connect to each other and to place. A big campus loses personality and personal responsibility. Our role as instructors is to connect students to nature. The further "padded" our students are, the more pampered and sheltered, the harder it will be for them to realize they are out in the wild where Nature is in control. Our job will be harder the fancier and bigger our campus is. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #58.3-4.39100.)

We hope to continue coming to Crane Flat in the years to come. I do hope that the development is environmentally friendly and in itself does not ruin the environment. I've actually liked the rustic aspect of the current Crane Flat campus. I enjoy the smallness of it, and hate to see it become a huge education site. (Individual, El Cerrito, CA - #17)

YI is a great thing for Yosemite; new campus is a good call, keep it simple, no more than 90 beds, concentrate this function in Yosemite Valley by working with the concessionaire. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#83 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should retain the rustic atmosphere of the Environmental Education Campus when making improvements.**

It is true that the campus currently has a rustic feel, and the alternatives should reflect keeping that feel alive. The electricity for the program comes from a diesel generator. Dilapidated buildings should be fixed, but not done away with. Over the past four years, there have also been problems with the septic system. Even though it was supposedly fixed, the smell of sewage still wafts in the area making it unpleasant to be around the campus. I do not think an increase of participants will help this process. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #43)

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**#2 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should preserve the Blister Rust Camp as an example of the park's working-class heritage.**

The Crane Flat Blister Rust Camp is the Park's only remaining work camp where the unlettered working man lived and toiled. Bulldozing this camp destroys the last vestige of this little-known element of Yosemite's cultural history. Replacing this rustic feature with a fancy facility is doubly tragic. YI says it wants to enhance student diversity, but is this project wiping out the blue-collar component of the region's heritage? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#1 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should maintain Civilian Conservation Corps buildings at the Environmental Education Campus.**

The construction phase and the operation of a larger facility will impact cultural resources that are on/in the ground or are standing structures. Most of the camp is gone, but the current facility is one of the park's only remnants of the important CCC era. How do we assure that we're not discarding something irreplaceable? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#3 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should maintain U.S. Navy buildings at the Environmental Education Campus.**

The dining room and the bigger bunkhouse are the only known remnants of the US Navy's WW II presence in Yosemite. Is it best to level these? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#90 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should clarify the design and operation of the proposed facilities.**

Type of Buildings: A. Who will have control as to the architectural style of the buildings? B. Will they be handicapped accessible land met current state codes in California? C. Will the staff have separate rooms, buildings or live off site? D. Will most road and parking be year around or gravel? E. Will there be outside activity areas, for programs, study and recreation? F. Will there be an outside deck or patio area for eating, programs, study etc.? G. Will the buildings have a sprinkler system for fire protection and will there be an adequate water supply for the system? H. Will the building be federal property or that of the Yosemite Institute? I. Will the maintenance and upkeep of the campus be a partnership or just part of the park's yearly budget? J. Will the food facilities be a separate building? K. Will there be a separate first aid facility on site? (Individual, Yuba City, CA - #47)

**#91 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should build sustainable and environmentally-friendly facilities for the Environmental Education Campus.**

NPCA also believes the redevelopment of the buildings at Crane Flat allows for the park and YI to make the campus a truly sustainable one. What better place to employ the cleanest technologies, use sustainable materials, and harness energy from renewable sources. The campus will provide a learning environment and allow YI to teach the students at Crane Flat about sustainability. Energy efficient operations will also reduce operational expenses in the long run. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Oakland, CA - #52)

With all buildings, roads, and structures, I would advise/suggest the use of solar, recycled materials that are available to reduce costs and improve relations with the environmental groups, and the residents of the country. (Individual, Campbell, CA - #40)

I believe a new, green facility can be a wonderful lesson to visitors in sustainability and its importance in today's changing world. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #54)

There are many issues that suggest that if, and when, YI does redevelop their Crane Flat campus, that the viable alternatives should not allow for an increase in the number of staff and participants. Rather, the maximum number that should be allowed is 75 people total, and the alternatives should reflect how the redevelopment is done. For example, creating a more ecologically sustainable campus that focuses on: using alternative energy sources (solar, bio-diesel—a diesel that is made from cooking oil), creating less waste (recycling, an indoor bear-proof composting facility on site, composting toilets), using hay bail structures and recycled building materials (the plastic "wood" and wood from other buildings), and, in

general, having a campus that teaches environmental education in its design. This campus could serve as a model for all other environmental education institutions in National Parks, and perhaps in the designing of how to make our Parks sustainable. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #43)

#### EXPANSION HARMS ENVIRONMENT

My suggestion is that the campus be reconstructed on its current footprint, using as many recycled/sustainably produced materials as possible. It should be designed to house a maximum of 75 to 100 students instead of the proposed 125 to 250. I understand that it would be ideal to be able to house all of the Yosemite Institute students in one locale, but I fear that the impacts of so many people using that space day after day, not to mention the space required to build the structures necessary to host that many folks, would be too great for such a sensitive area. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #44)

Plans for green building, while laudable (and should be the standard), do not mitigate for an expanded footprint or for expansion in numbers of students. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Bend, OR - #56)

#### EXPANSION HELPS ENVIRONMENT

It is a good idea to build this new campus. . . . A new campus, even larger campus, would be more sustainable and have less impact on renewable resources. (Individual, Mariposa, CA - #36)

### **#93 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should place water treatment facilities and other additions out of view from the Tioga Road.**

The forest meadow at Crane Flat appears to be the largest and most lush of its type seen from the Tioga Road. As such, it is unique, and it is especially important that it not be compromised. Inescapably, the visual impact of the water treatment facility as seen from the Tioga Road would be great. This is supposed to be a National Park. To the extent that facilities may be necessary, they most certainly should not be located right on a major scenic drive. The present facility already impairs the view, and a greatly expanded one would have an even greater impact. Particularly with a large parking lot immediately adjacent to the scenic road, as shown in the conceptual drawings. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, San Francisco, CA - #53)

### **#75 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should clarify if Crane Flat is the best location for the Yosemite Institute.**

Location: Crane Flat: 1. Is Crane Flat the best location for this campus? 2. Is this to be a year around facility? 3. Is this a central location for field trips? 4. Is this location close to Yosemite NPS staff who are participating in the campus's educational programs or is travel time a consideration? 5. Is this location handicapped accessible? 6. Does the weather and road conditions limit accessibility? (Individual, Yuba City, CA - #47)

As you deliberate the campus development options for Yosemite Institute, please consider that Adults as well as children have benefited greatly from YI's programs and that the location of their facility at Crane Flat is integral to this success. Being midway between the Valley and Tuolumne Meadows and adjacent to the Tuolumne Giant Sequoia Grove provides unparalleled opportunities for experiencing the diversity and range of ecosystems in Yosemite. (Recreational Organization, Walnut Creek, CA - #13)

### **#77 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should consider how locating the Yosemite Institute at Crane Flat may impact visitor experiences.**

I have always felt that having a "campus," however small, is problematical at this particular place. Visitors coming in from the Tioga Road see this as a first sign of "civilization" and are confused (there is even a sign posted saying that restrooms are further on at the gas station). It seems strange also to have this use so prominently along the road in a National Park—and somewhat elitist—also to be located beside a busy road is not best for the young students. (Individual, Mammoth Lakes, CA - #18)

Will this bigger facility attract more drive-by visitors to stop in, looking for a Coke, a restroom, lodging? How will they feel being turned away? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#81 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should develop the Environmental Education Campus at Crane Flat to decrease Yosemite Valley crowding.**

Environmental Education Campus Development: I heartily support the work of the Yosemite Institute, and am enthusiastic about its continuation and expansion. I cannot tell from the brief letter I received whether there is a plan to move the Institute from Crane Flats into the Valley. I feel very strongly that the Valley is overcrowded as it is, and that the physical plant for the institute can be expanded from its present site, while staying where it is. The fact of its removal from the scurry of the Valley can only improve the experience for all who attend the Institute's programs. (Individual, No Address - #35)

**#61 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should allow students to stay overnight in the valley.**

We are asking that your planning include both a new YI campus inside the park—Crane Flat is the obvious choice—and the opportunity for our students to stay overnight in Yosemite Valley. The future of Yosemite National Park must include room for our student citizens to have the ability stay in, and study in, Yosemite. To do anything less would be to help unravel what John Muir intended for our park. (Individual, Cupertino, CA - #19)

I strongly urge the Yosemite Institute to keep the residential cabins and allow students to continue overnighing in the Valley. As a student who went through the program myself, I wholly believe that by eliminating these residential halls, the Institute would be denying future students the complete experience of absolute marvel and wonder that is Yosemite National Park. Nothing would better give students the feeling of respect and appreciation which the land deserves than the experience of living first-hand in the heart of the Valley itself. (Individual, Temple City, CA - #24)

**#104 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should limit student access to Yosemite Valley.**

Be assured I love young people and believe utmost in their getting an outdoor education, however I believe YI's students should be given just a very small portion of their time in Yosemite Valley as they are noisy, congest the buses, congest the trails—Perhaps most of their learning experience can occur outside of the Valley itself and their brief time in the valley be the culmination of their other studies—and also perhaps another place could be found for their headquarters. (Individual, Mammoth Lakes, CA - #18)

**#6 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should recognize the benefits of retaining Yosemite Valley accommodations for Yosemite Institute programs.**

**TO STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

We wanted to take a moment to jot down some of the reasons why we enjoy the entire valley experience every February when we visit Yosemite National Park. Staying in the valley, we enjoy the beauty of the sun rising over the valley. Walking to breakfast in the morning we experience the changing weather in the valley. We are up at 6:30 AM for breakfast at 7:00 AM and meet our instructors at 8:00 AM to begin our day. We experience early morning wildlife, i.e. deer, coyotes, etc., before the valley "wakes up." During the evenings we enjoy the beauty of the moon rising over Half Dome. We ice skate in the village, outdoors! Our evening programs are so special when we take night hikes and see nocturnal animal life. And, of course, the snow falling at night is spectacular to walk through. . . . Transporting students in and out of the valley each day would add to the pollution problems you are trying to prevent! Temple City High School has been participating in the Yosemite Institute program for over twenty years, and we cherish the memories we have of our "valley experience." We would like to continue to offer students the special opportunity of "waking up in the beautiful Yosemite Valley." (Individual, Temple City, CA - #22)

The busing experience for kids has to be a distraction from their time in the park. Staring out the window for 45 minutes twice a day? What is the "high quality" advantage of anyone adding that to their experience of Yosemite? Time afield in Yosemite will be reduced by 20% for those riding buses each day. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

### TO STUDENT ACCESS TO MEDICAL FACILITIES

We like being close to medical facilities in the valley, which we have used from time to time. (Individual, Temple City, CA - #22)

YI kids visit the Yosemite Medical Clinic a lot, scores of times a year, most of these are students staying in the Valley. Moving them away from this facility hurts the safety of their experience. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

### TO STUDENT TRANSPORTATION COSTS

What cost will the bus operation add to student expenses? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

The cost of bus transportation daily could possibly increase the cost to our students, which might make it financially impossible to attend Yosemite Institute. (Individual, Temple City, CA - #22)

## **#87 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should provide environmental education facilities in Yosemite Valley for Yosemite Institute students.**

Alternative solutions: After all the work in park visitor contacts, stewardship projects, and bio monitoring, Y.I. does on a daily basis for the NPS which greatly benefits NPS interpretation/ and mission, I feel we deserve the opportunity to remain in Yosemite Valley. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #41)

We are looking to expand in the "wildness" at Crane Flat when our program would flow better if we had guaranteed/affordable space in the valley. We need to get space in the valley. Our impact on the ecosystem at Crane Flat (BRC) is upsetting. Keep the impact in the valley. Expansion at BRC will detract from the student experience of "intimate, small and connected." The "feel" will change to one of man over nature instead of man in nature. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #58)

Is there a need to re-develop the Crane Flat Campus, and what is a reasonable need for the next 25 years? How important is education in Yosemite National Park, and why not offset the development of Crane Flat by staying in Yosemite Valley where NPS is better able to mitigate the impacts of visitors? How is consumerism valued more (Curry Village vs. a YI site in Yosemite Valley) than education? (Individual, No Address - #3)

Ask NPS and YCS to grant us Building/Lodging Space in the Valley. If NPS is asking YI to handle part of their interpretation mission, it seems we naturally deserve space in Yosemite valley as most of our programming occurs here, and we are working closely (beyond special interest group status) with N.P.S. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #4)

### CURRY VILLAGE AND YOSEMITE LODGE

Maybe YI should grow in the Valley, where there's already lots of tourism infrastructure, and there's more building planned. Is an opportunity being missed, to dedicate some of the growth planned for Curry Village and Yosemite Lodge to an environmental education facility? Why would it be advantageous to say that students belong somewhere outside the Valley? The concessionaire should be compelled, through the CSP, to provide affordable accommodations for high quality resource-related education and interpretation via YI. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

I believe the best solution is a campus at Curry Village that is separate from the main areas and only for YI. This idea would work well since Curry will be reduced under the valley plan. YI could take over parts that would have been removed. (Individual, No Address - #2)

Turn over a Yosemite Lodge motel unit for YI use. Rent from NPS not concessionaire: 16 motel rooms turned into dorm rooms by replacement of beds with 4 bunk beds (1 up, 1 down) 16 x 8 = 128 pillows. This would not require any new building construction. Shouldn't the children have the opportunity to have an environmental educational experience in Yosemite Valley? Or will it merely be the elite visitors who can pay the increasingly upscale prices for the existing and the proposed new resort-type developments for the concessionaire (at Yosemite Lodge), to be bulldozed and built with public funds? (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

There is still room in the YVP for the park to build an EE campus in Curry Village, that will really be more accessible to more students. YCS will moan about losing the business of tour bus companies, but they should put their money where their mouth is. If the park leadership thinks that the next generation of voters, consumers, citizens and park users is a special interest group, it needs to re-examine its priorities. Everyone wins with a campus in the Valley. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#84 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should consider if alternative locations to Crane Flat would be better for the Yosemite Institute.**

Alternate Location: 1. Is there a year around location that is more centrally located to NPS staff and to field trips within the park? 2. Would an alternate location be able to use the regular bus service within the park? 3. Has consideration of the new state university and its location been considered as an outside resource? 4. Is there a historical area outside of the valley that will lend itself as a good alternative to the Crane Flat area? 5. The University of California Berkley, School of Forestry has a summer camp just north of the park. Has a joint use of this site been considered? Has this site been viewed and its staff interviewed as to how their facility functions and any consideration that might help in designing and operating a larger campus on a park site? (Individual, Yuba City, CA - #47)

What alternative sites did you consider for this project? Crane Flat cries out for a regional solution to electricity and pollution control (waste water treatment). Currently, Crane Flat has a separate waste water treatment solution for each of the following locals: Gas Station—leach field, Campground Loops—5 separate leach fields, Residence 6000 (Ranger House)—leach field, Grove Parking—vault toilets, Lookout/Heliport—leach field/vault toilet. All of these systems function marginally and present constant operation and maintenance problems. Electricity is the same story; one diesel generator provides power for the gas station while a separate diesel generator provides power for the Lookout/Heliport, Ranger House (duplex) and the YI complex. It is obvious that an alternate location with existing infrastructure would be a better solution for this increased development. What about Wawona? What about outside the park? The last thing that Crane Flat needs is another stand alone utility system. Why the rush to add development to park infrastructure when the NPS can't come close to taking care of the infrastructure they have now? (Individual, El Portal, CA - #46)

**#85 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should propose alternative locations for the Environmental Education Campus.**

**FORESTA**

I think Foresta would be a good location for the Campus, provided that the view of Big Meadow from the Big Oak Flat Road is not impacted, and the historic route of the Coulterville Road is not disturbed. (Individual, San Carlos, CA - #39)

**MARIN HEADLANDS**

Please retain roughly the present building footprints and consider the alternatives of expansion at other sites such as in the Marin Headlands at the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, or constructing a new campus in Martinez. (Individual, Citrus Heights, CA - #48)

**MARTINEZ**

If YI wants to increase capacity to educate children regarding the environment, a campus in Martinez could be considered linking to the John Muir House and his environmental values, experiences, and writings. This would also provide access to lower and middle income and other communities not well served by environmental education. (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #49)

Some potential alternate solutions: None of this should be accomplished by new development in Yosemite National Park. a. There should be no expansion at Crane Flat or development of a new campus anywhere in Yosemite. b. If YI wants to expand, a campus in Martinez could be of benefit. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

### EVERGREEN LODGE

Evergreen Lodge is an existing facility just outside Yosemite National Park with a similar configuration to the existing Crane Flat Campus, but in good condition. It was recently for sale and might still be a possibility. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Bend, OR - #56)

### HAZEL GREEN

The big money behind YI should purchase land outside of Yosemite to develop. For example, why couldn't YI develop Hazel Green? They could build all of the affordable dormitories they desire and insure student diversity going by the logic presented by the NPS "planning document." (Individual, El Portal, CA - #46)

### BETWEEN MARIPOSA AND EL PORTAL

I favor the development of a center for environmental education. I think that easy access to a general purpose residential center is crucial. Presuming that there will be integration with programs at UC Merced, a location between Mariposa and El Portal seems best. It is outside the park and yet close by. From that major center, other locations in the park could be used as temporary or seasonal sites, depending on the needs of the programs that are supported through the center. Locations such as Wawona or Fish Camp would involve inconvenience in travel and no better access to areas of Yosemite. During the winter, it would involve travel in snowy and icy conditions to and from Yosemite Valley, and the road would have increased traffic from Badger Pass. (Individual, Fresno, CA - #37)

### **#86 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should not propose Foresta or Wawona as alternative sites for the Environmental Education Campus.**

Neither Foresta nor Wawona should be considered as appropriate sites. These areas are in the Park and should not be further developed and impacted. The 1980 General Management Plan (GMP) intends Foresta to be restored, not developed. It should not be used for student or additional employee housing for the same reasons as at Crane Flat. Foresta is also Great Gray Owl territory. In the 90s many members of Friends of Yosemite Valley fought NPS proposed employee housing development in Foresta which would have greatly impacted the Great Gray Owls—let's not threaten the owls again. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

### **#88 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should locate the campus outside of Yosemite National Park.**

Find another (Sierra) Institute site and establish it outside Y.N.P. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #4)

I am opposed to the construction of a campus in Yosemite NP. YNP is supposed to be protected so ecosystems, wildlife, vegetation, and natural processes are preserved and can function without our interference. Place this facility outside YNP and have small facility inside YNP for interpretation. (Individual, Houston, TX - #30)

Alternative solutions: YNI opens another campus in the Sierra and keeps a cap on growth at YI. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #41)

### **#89 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should include maps of alternative sites.**

The need is to replace these aging facilities and stop putting addition funds into repairing building that need to be completely rebuilt. The question is then of location and size. I would like to see maps of the alternative sites including roads to the sites. (Individual, Yuba City, CA - #47)

### **#59 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should address the impacts to park resources from increasing Yosemite Institute students.**

My first concern is that any planned growth will have a significant impact on the surrounding area. With an increase of students, there will be a larger footprint on the existing land, the students will undoubtedly need

a place to play in during their free time, which will extend into the wilderness area behind the Crane Flat Campus. Furthermore, any increase in teaching groups will have its impact on the surrounding meadows and cross country ski trails, and undoubtedly on the Tuolumne Grove of the Giant Sequoias. The fact that I saw a great gray owl in the nearby meadows two days ago makes me concerned with how the growth will affect not only the flora, but also the fauna. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #43)

I also want to be certain that, should this project move in the direction of not only replacement of present facilities but also student capacity expansion, it will not make a dangerous level of impact on our rich and valuable natural resources in Crane Flat and its surrounding areas. I believe that the team evaluating this proposal will be approaching it from a similar point of view; at least, that is my hope. I believe that there is a great opportunity in this proposal, as long as decisions concerning each step of the development are handled judiciously and in the interest of the environmental health and protection of surrounding areas. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #54)

What environmental impacts will radiate to Foresta, the Merced Grove, the Valley's east and west end with more students being bused to these places for the day? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

#### **EFFECTS ON TRAFFIC**

Adding more traffic and buses to the Crane Flat area will increase traffic congestion and create more dangerous driving conditions as traffic moves to and from the Tioga Road to Yosemite Valley. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

#### **EFFECTS ON PARK VISITORS**

In other areas of the Park, often visitors and others remark that some of the existing YI groups of children are noisy and disturbing. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, Yosemite National Park, CA - #56)

#### **EFFECTS ON STUDENT SAFETY**

Another concern I have about growth there is one of transportation, especially in regards to the student safety. The majority of the programs that come to YI (Yosemite Institute), come because they want to experience Yosemite Valley. If they stay at Crane Flat, this means they will have to commute to the Valley. More time on the road [increases] their chances of being injured in a auto accident. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #43)

#### **EFFECTS ON SCIENTIFIC STUDIES**

ISBP's MAPS project has several years of baseline data that'll suffer a discontinuity with the increased disturbance of more people in the area through the whole breeding season. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

### **#4 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should assess the impact of the Environmental Education Campus Plan on local Native American's ability to harvest medicinal plants.**

Local Indians still gather medicinal plants (Angelica, etc.) in the meadow here; what impact will more student activities have on their needs? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

### **#92 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should address the impacts to Crane Flat from increased water usage and sewage disposal.**

Much of our concern is the result of the proposed four-fold (or greater) increase in capacity. To go from a current capacity of 76 to 300 or more appears likely to result in unacceptable and unmitigable problems, given the constraints of the Crane Flat site. The more obvious ones are water supply, and disposal of sewage effluent. The present water supply is from a well in the meadow, so there may already be a lowering of the meadow water table. Has any attempt been made to measure this? In any event, it seems quite likely that a four-fold (or greater) increase in withdrawal of water from the meadow would have an unacceptable impact on the meadow. If sewage effluent has to be disposed of with a spray field, it appears that the site would be so taken up with other development that it would be necessary to move the

Wilderness boundary back to create enough space. This would be a terrible precedent, going counter to the very idea of establishing the boundary in the first place, which was to draw a line beyond which development will not occur. If it were to be permitted here, it would open the door to other "adjustments," with the potential for severely impacting the integrity of the designated Wilderness. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, San Francisco, CA - #53)

Increased wastewater production needs appropriate disposal – where? It already doesn't smell good up there, with the new septic system. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

#### **MONITOR AND MITIGATE**

We understand the above concerns over water supply and effluent disposal are to be addressed by converting the effluent back into potable water, and recycling it back into the water supply lines. This degree of sophistication would be wonderful if it worked. What happens if it doesn't? Or if it turns out to be too expensive? We simply draw down the meadow water table, and move the Wilderness boundary? Easy solutions, and totally unacceptable! Even if the money is found to build a technological wonder, such systems have a way of breaking down, or being shut down for maintenance. What happens in those inevitable eventualities? (Preservation/Conservation Organization, San Francisco, CA - #53)

#### **ESTABLISH TERTIARY SEWAGE TREATMENT**

I strongly support Yosemite Institute, a unit of the Yosemite National Institute in its mission of environmental education. With respect to the proposed reconstruction and/or expansion of the present campus due to aging of the current structures and the increased maintenance costs associated with same, please require tertiary sewage treatment, once again to ensure that the present Crane Flat meadow will not be reduced or otherwise negatively impacted. (Individual, Citrus Heights, CA - #48)

### **#66 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should limit the occupancy of the Environmental Education Campus.**

As a resident of Yosemite I am against the expansion of Y.I.'s Crane Flat campus for the following reason: The old Blister Rust Camp area is too small for the proposed 300 bed spaces. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #38)

#### **LIMIT TO CURRENT CAPACITY**

Crane Flat is at a biologically sustainable carrying capacity at 80 participants. Fixing existing plumbing and creating a green campus with the same number of participants makes the most sense to me as a field instructor. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #41)

#### **LIMIT TO 100 PEOPLE**

We need to stop growing. I think we should limit occupancy to 100 people. We need to focus on quality. A sustainable campus with solar, recycled material etc is a good role model, but we need to stay connected to our environment. Two-hundred-fifty people is too much. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #58)

#### **LIMIT TO 150 PEOPLE**

The size of a new campus must be carefully studied. Due to the nature of outdoor education, you have to consider where all the people are going to be outdoors every day. Due to impacts on trails, the number of trails available, and the limits of winter weather, the number of people the area could sustain would be maxed out at about 150. (Individual, Mariposa, CA - #36)

#### **DECREASE CAPACITY**

What would you like to see developed as "reasonable" alternatives for YI and NPS to consider in the redevelopment of the Crane Flat Campus? . . . Downsize use of Crane Flat by YI (<50 people). (Individual, No Address - #3)

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**#10 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should incorporate carrying capacities for park sites potentially impacted by the plan.**

Carrying capacity needs to be determined scientifically, so the wilderness of Crane Flat and Yosemite Valley is at a high biological integrity, and not harmed, diminished, or altered by additional instructors and hiking groups... I see the need for carrying capacity and sustainability to be a major consideration of this NEPA Process, and not simply growth with a bigger campus. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #4)

Yosemite Valley Plan's (YVP) failure to adopt carrying capacity: The Yosemite Institute expansion proposal is another example of the failure of the Yosemite Valley Plan to adopt carrying capacity numbers for the protection of the natural environment, and instead to accommodate an ever increasing growth in visitorship, not only supported by the managers and administrators of the National Park Service (NPS), but actively promoted by NPS. (The YVP throws out the Carrying Capacity numbers instituted in the 1980 General Management Plan (GMP) and leaves it wide open.) (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #49)

## Special Land Designations

**#94 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should clarify whether any changes to the Wilderness boundaries are being proposed.**

It is our understanding that the Park Service is accumulating a list of Wilderness boundary changes it would like to seek. If this is true, the public should be aware of it now so they could weigh in with their opinions. (Preservation/Conservation Organization, San Francisco, CA - #53)

**#5 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should not expand the Environmental Education Campus into any designated Wilderness.**

With respect to the proposed reconstruction and/or expansion of the present campus: . . . Please allow no expansion into designated wilderness. (Individual, Citrus Heights, CA - #48)

## Visitor Services

**#63 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should limit the total number of visitors allowed in the park per day.**

I would like to see strict limits on the total visitors to the park on any one day, both in the summer and in the winter months. (Individual, Redding, CA - #28)

**#97 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should limit visitors and events during the off-season to allow the park to rejuvenate.**

Enticement of additional visitors and groups by holding meetings, seminars, conferences, and/or colloquiums at YI facilities in or around Yosemite especially during the off-season, non-summer months would bump-up visitation. The concessionaire, Delaware North, would then further profit from the (publicly built) lodging to accommodate the participants, while the Yosemite animals and ecosystems would be further impacted. The late fall/winter/early spring is when the Valley rejuvenates so that sensitive resources can survive (or have a better chance anyway) the busy summer; to increase impacts during the shoulder seasons/off-season would be disastrous to Yosemite's ecology. (Individual, San Francisco, CA - #49)

**#96 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should examine potential impacts of new trails in undisturbed areas.**

Might new trails be built? These may bring students into places that aren't currently visited, and may attract more members of the general public, too. What's the balance between when a new trail is a good thing or a harmful thing to a quiet area like this? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#95 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should mark the original route of the Big Oak Flat Road for pedestrian travel.**

Regarding environmental education campus development, I would favor relocation away from Crane Flat. Whether or not the Yosemite Institute remains there, I would like to have the original alignment of the Big Oak Flat Road marked so that a visitor could follow it on foot from Crane Flat to Gin Flat. The Gin Flat end is in good shape, but the Crane Flat end is a mess because of erosion and developments. (Individual, San Carlos, CA - #39)

**#72 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should build a dining room similar to the former Curry Dining Room.**

I would like to see a beautiful camp Curry Dining Room similar to the one that burned down. (Individual, Redding, CA - #28)

## Transportation

**#73 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should assess the impact of expanding the Environmental Education Center on the traffic safety.**

More employees will commute to this facility every day, which has impacts for traffic, roads closed by rockfall or snowstorms or MVA's [motor vehicle accidents] and for parking. There will certainly be more winter access and traffic problems for employees and program participants. It will not be a safe place when employees can't get to those 2-300 kids to feed them, supervise them, teach them. More transportation of all these students translates directly into more vehicular hazards. If YI uses vans, that'll surely be an added hazard. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

Areas of concern that need solid research if expansion occurs: Additional bus/car traffic [could be a] serious safety hazard in snow/ice conditions. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #41)

**#14 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should evaluate the impact of expanding the Environmental Education Campus on noise pollution.**

What are the important issues and opportunities to consider as Yosemite Institute and the National Park Service move forward with the project to redevelop the Crane Flat Campus? Noise pollution with added vehicle traffic. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #4)

**#68 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should consider the impacts from increased busing.**

### ON ROADS

As a resident of Yosemite I am against the expansion of Y.I.'s Crane Flat campus for the following reasons: The busing issue will create a great impact on the roads. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #38)

### ON PARK RESOURCES

The number of bus trips that isn't mentioned in the basic EECDP information is surprising. What environmental impacts will radiate to Forests, the Valley's east and west ends, Merced Grove, etc., with more students being bused to these places each day? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

#### ON YOSEMITE INSTITUTE PROGRAMS

Another concern I have about growth there is one of transportation . . . . If [students] stay at Crane Flat, this means they will have to commute to the Valley. . . . [Commuting] will be of logistical concern when there is too much snow on the roads to bus students elsewhere during the teaching day. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #43)

#### ON FUEL CONSUMPTION AND VEHICLE WEAR

If our students are mostly at BRC we will spend many hours in transport, [increasing] impacts on fuel use and van maintenance. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #58)

#### ON VEHICLE STORAGE AND SERVICE

What effects of an increased bus fleet? Where are buses stored and serviced? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

#### ON AIR QUALITY

Transporting students in and out of the valley each day would add to the pollution problems you are trying to prevent! (Individual, Temple City, CA - #22)

### **#24 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should include the reasons for rejecting Crane Flat as a parking site.**

Why was Crane Flat area rejected by NPS as a site for out-of-valley parking in the YVP? These reasons are in the YVP administrative record, are probably about wildlife disturbances and utility challenges—and they still apply to YI's construction, right? These should be expressly addressed in this project. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

### **#25 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should specify where parking areas will be located at Crane Flat.**

There have been discussions of placing "out of valley" parking at Crane Flat. Where will that be? (Individual, El Portal, CA - #46)

### **#28 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should not pave any unpaved areas at the Environmental Education Campus for parking.**

With respect to the proposed reconstruction and/or expansion of the present campus: . . . Do not permit the construction of any new parking lots that would result in the paving of presently unpaved areas. (Individual, Citrus Heights, CA - #48)

## **Park Operations**

### **#38 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should address plans for law enforcement and emergency services.**

How will NPS address needs for law enforcement, traffic control, response to MVA's [motor vehicle accidents], fire protection, etc., between Crane Flat and Hodgdon Meadow? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

#### RESPONSE TO TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Traffic at Crane Flat will suffer more congestion with a larger facility, especially with daily bus arrivals and departures. How will NPS respond to a possible increase in car accidents? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#37 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should address fire protection plans for the expanded campus.**

What will change for NPS regarding structural fire protection of this larger complex nine miles from a fire station? Will there be enough access around all structures to allow attack from all sides? How to keep a structural fire from spreading into the adjacent forest? . . . How will wildland fire protection strategies need to be changed to protect an expensive new facility? Will trees in or out of Wilderness need to be felled? Other fuel reduction needs? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

## Employee Housing

**#106 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should address the impacts of increasing the Environmental Education Campus staff on nearby communities.**

What environmental impacts will radiate from this growth to El Portal, and Foresta with more employees needing housing and services, commuting, etc. to/from these places? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

Increasing YI staff will mean growing the need for housing, transportation and other services in El Portal or Foresta. Their current impact on the El Portal community is generally not considered a favorable one by other residents. How is their taking over more housing mitigated? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

### IMPACTS ON HOUSING

**#40 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should address the cumulative impacts of increased Environmental Education Campus staffing.**

Increasing YI staff will mean growing the need for housing, transportation and other services in El Portal or Foresta. Their current impact on the El Portal community is generally not considered a favorable one by other residents. How is their taking over more housing mitigated? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

Housing at Crane Flat for increased staff means yet more increase in traffic, need for services, noise, night lighting, possibly pets, parking, unanticipated radiating impacts from more residents adding to disturbances. Going from 2 residents to 6-8 is a big jump in a different kind of impact from people who live in a place. (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

An increase in students will also mean the need for more staff. Currently, there is not enough space to house the essential staff needed for the programs, nor is there adequate housing available in the surrounding communities. More staff would mean either a larger footprint on the area, or that staff have to commute over larger distances (which is one of the reason why the most recent food services manager quit). (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #43)

### ON HOUSING IN NEARBY COMMUNITIES

What environmental impacts will radiate from this growth to El Portal, and Foresta with more employees needing housing and services, commuting, etc. to/from these places? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#39 Public Concern: Yosemite National Park should recognize that locating the Environmental Education Campus at Crane Flat may attract undesirable employees.**

What kind of employee will YI find to live in a remote place like Crane Flat? Look at the problems that the concessioner has with turn-over, good service, and maintenance staff, and a need to hire people with sketchy histories. Should anyone worry that all the new campus can find for menial service jobs will be otherwise unemployable people, with criminal pasts? The hardships of minimum wage work in an isolated setting could mean a high turnover of undesirables. Will YI be able to get a higher quality of employee to

live or work here, in this remote setting? Can they assure that they'll find people that they want to work around kids? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#41 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus should identify the potential employers of campus bus drivers.**

Who will their (bus drivers) employer be? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

**#42 Public Concern: The Environmental Education Campus Plan should address the needs of campus bus drivers.**

What effects of an increased bus fleet? Where will drivers live? . . . What services will they require? (Individual, Yosemite National Park, CA - #57)

# Appendix A

## Content Analysis Process

Public input on the Environmental Education Campus Plan is documented and analyzed using a process called content analysis, which is a systematic method of compiling and categorizing the full range of public viewpoints and concerns regarding a plan or project. Content analysis is intended to facilitate good decisionmaking by helping the planning team to clarify, adjust, or incorporate technical information into preparing the environmental impact statement. All responses (i.e., public hearing transcripts, letters, emails, faxes, and other types of input) are included in this analysis.

In the content analysis process used for this project, each response is given a unique identifying number, which allows analysts to link specific comments to original letters. Respondents' names and addresses are then entered into a project-specific database program, enabling creation of a complete mailing list of all respondents. The database is also used to track pertinent demographic information, such as responses from special interest groups or tribal, federal, state, county, and local governments.

All input is considered and reviewed by two analysts. Each response is first read by one analyst and sorted into comments addressing various concerns and themes. Comments are then entered verbatim into the database. A second analyst then reviews the sorted comments to ensure an accurate and consistent database.

In preparing the final summary analysis, public statements are reviewed again using database reports. These reports contain all coded input and allow analysts to identify a wide range of public concerns and analyze the relationships between them. The final product includes a list of public concerns addressing the proposal, and supporting sample quotes.

This process, and the resulting summary, are not intended to replace comments in their original form. Rather, they provide a map to the letters and other input on file at the Superintendent's office in Yosemite, California. Both the planning team and the public are encouraged to review the actual letters firsthand.

It is important for the public and project team members to understand that this process makes no attempt to treat comments as votes. In no way does content analysis attempt to sway decisionmakers toward the will of any majority. Content analysis ensures that every comment is considered at some point in the decision process.

# Appendix B

## Demographics

Demographic coding allows managers to form an overall picture of who is submitting comments, where they live, their general affiliation with various organizations or government agencies, and the manner in which they respond. The database can be used to isolate specific combinations of information about public comment. For example, a report can include public comment only from people in California or a report can identify specific types of land users such as recreational groups, government agencies or businesses. Demographic coding allows managers to focus on specific areas of concern linked to respondent categories, geographic areas and response types.

Although demographic information is captured and tracked, it is important to note that the consideration of public comment is not a vote-counting process. Every comment and suggestion has value, whether expressed by one or a thousand respondents. All input is considered, and the analysis team attempts to capture all relevant public concerns in the analysis process. Yosemite National Park received and processed 58 letters, representing 61 signatures, for the Environmental Education Campus Plan. The letters were then forwarded to the Content Analysis Team for further analysis and public concern identification.

In the tables displayed below, please note that demographic figures are given for the number of responses and signatures. For the purposes of this analysis, the following definitions apply: “response” refers to a discrete piece of correspondence and “signature” refers to each individual who adds his or her name to a response, endorsing the view of the primary respondent(s).

## Geographic Origin

Geographic origin is tracked for each response. Letters and emails were received from four (4) of the United States. The response format did not reveal geographic origin for five (5) responses. The state of residence for each individual signature was not tracked for multi-signature responses. Signatures on multi-signature responses were all assigned to the state of the person or organization originating the response. County origin for responses received from California is tracked in Table B2.

Table B1 - Geographic Origin of Response by State

Country	State	Number of Responses	Number of Signatures
United States	California	50	53
	Illinois	1	1
	Oregon	1	1
	Texas	1	1
	Unknown Location	5	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>61</b>

Table B2 - Geographic Origin of Response by California Counties

State	County	Number of Responses	Number of Signatures
California	Alameda	2	2
	Contra Costa	3	3
	Fresno	2	2
	Los Angeles	6	7
	Marin	2	2
	Mariposa	13	14
	Mono	1	1
	Orange	1	1
	Sacramento	1	1
	San Bernardino	1	1
	San Francisco	3	3
	San Mateo	2	2
	Santa Barbara	1	1
	Santa Clara	4	4
	Santa Cruz	3	4
	Shasta	1	1
	Sonoma	1	1
	Stanislaus	1	1
	Sutter	1	1
	Tuolumne	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>53</b>

## Organizational Affiliation

Organization types were tracked for each response received on the project. Responses were received from individuals, recreation and preservation organizations.

Table B3 - Number of Responses/Signatures by Organizational Affiliation

Organization Field	Organization Type	Number of Responses	Number of Signatures
I	Individual	53	55
P	Preservation/Conservation Organization	4	5
R	Recreation Organization	1	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>61</b>

## User Type

User types were tracked for each response received on the project.

Table B4 - Number of Responses/Signatures by User Type

User Type Code	User Type	Number of Responses	Number of Signatures
A0	Area Resident nonspecific	1	1
D	Educational Groups	22	23
H	Hikers/other foot access	1	2
X	No identified type/Not Applicable	34	35
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>61</b>

## Response Type

Response types were tracked for each response received on the project. Responses were received in the form of letters and Yosemite Response Forms.

Table B5 - Number of Responses/Signatures by Response Type

Response Type #	Response Type	Number of Responses	Number of Signatures
1	Letter/Fax	45	48
6	Response Forms	13	13
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>61</b>

## Delivery Type

Delivery types were tracked for each response received on the project. Responses were received by email, fax and commercial delivery.

Table B6 - Number of Responses/Signatures by Delivery Type

Delivery Type Code	Delivery Type	Number of Responses	Number of Signatures
E	Email	31	33
F	Fax	2	2
M	Mail/Commercial Delivery	7	7
U	Unknown Delivery Type	18	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>58</b>	<b>61</b>

# Appendix C

## Information Requests

Information request codes are applied to those documents with specific requests for information pertaining to the proposal. Respondents often ask for copies of the planning documents, Federal Register Notice, mailing list and other additional information. FOIA requests are handled through Early Attention designation.

For the Environmental Education Campus Plan we have two information requests:

Table C1 – General Information Requests

Letter Number	Name and Address	Remarks
4	Karen Nichols, P.O. Box 625, Yosemite, CA 95389	Request for Yosemite Institute's Crane Flat Campus Redevelopment Program and EIS.
33	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, P.O. Box 396, Twain Harte, CA 95383	Request to be notified when additional design plans and drafts are available.

# Appendix D

## List of Preparers

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