

A detailed topographic map of Yosemite National Park, showing mountain peaks, valleys, and trails. The map is rendered in a monochromatic green and brown color scheme. Key features include Indian Rock (8462), Basket Dome (7604), North Dome (7526), and Yosemite Falls (6673). The map also shows the Merced River and various trails like the Little Yosemite Trail.

Long-Range Interpretive Plan

Yosemite National Park
February 2012

Interpretation in Yosemite: A Short Photo Essay



© Jeffrey Trust

National Park Service Interpretation began in Yosemite in 1920, and park rangers, like the late Bob Fry, have introduced millions of visitors to the wonders of this iconic place.

The purpose of Interpretation and Education in the National Park Service is to provide memorable, meaningful, and inspirational experiences related to the parks and strengthen public understanding of the full meaning and relevance of the nation's natural and cultural resources.

NPS Interpretation and Education Business Plan, 2006



Visiting photographers enhance their skills through a class taught by The Ansel Adams Gallery.



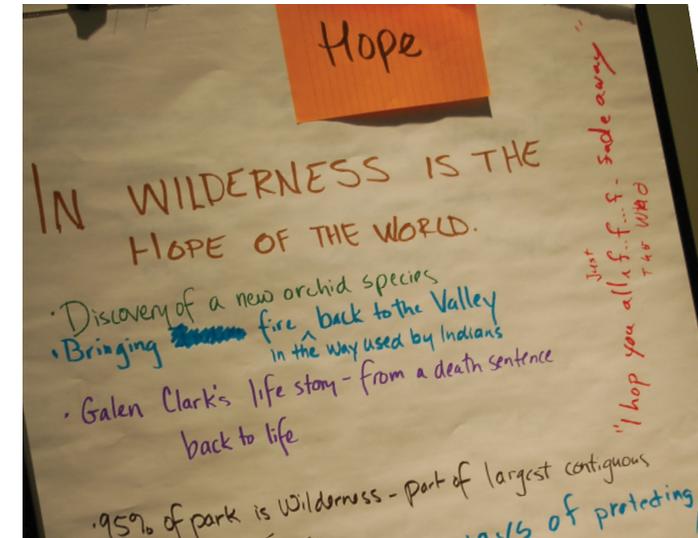
[Yosemite Valley Visitor Center. Visitors can learn about early Yosemite residents, geologic processes, and more while in the Exhibit Hall.](#)



Park partners and staff discuss goals, themes, and outcomes of Yosemite Interpretation and Education during a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan workshop.



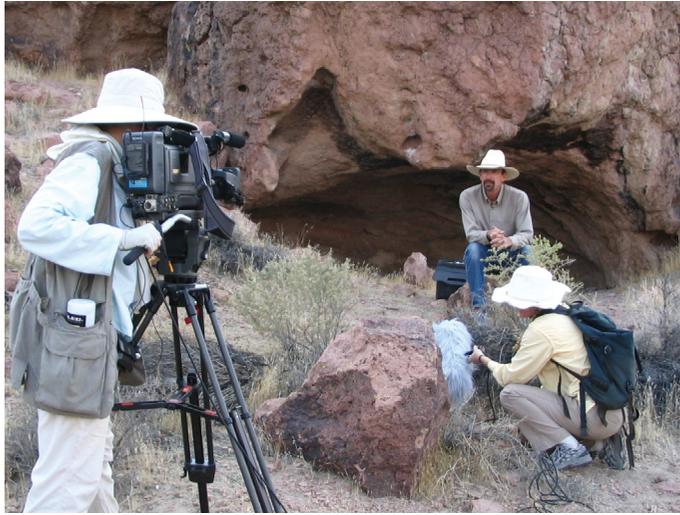
Rangers Sharon Miyako and Gary Wuchner engage young visitors during National Junior Ranger Day.



Shaping the future of Yosemite Interpretation;
Comprehensive Interpretive Plan development process,
Yosemite Valley, 2008.

The park exists to preserve both the resources and dynamic processes that contribute to Yosemite's attractiveness including its scenic beauty, outstanding wilderness values, nearly full diversity of Sierra Nevada environments, evidence of the geologic processes that formed the Sierra Nevada, and cultural resources—both historic and prehistoric.

Statement for Management (SFM), 1994



Partnering with our neighbors; video production in Bodie with a focus on archeology.



Yosemite Leadership Program intern Viridiana Marcial conducts social science research in Wawona.



[A journey through time across the Wawona Covered Bridge in the Pioneer Yosemite History Center with Burrell Maier, NPS Stage Driver.](#)



© Leslie Stone Associates

A young visitor takes a self-guided tour through the restored Indian Village.



[Deaf Services intern Janelle Butler interprets a Valley Floor Tram Tour for park visitors \(Tunnel View\).](#)



Yosemite Leadership Program intern Billy Mayse at work doing meadow restoration.



[Students experience Cook's Meadow first-hand during a class with environmental educators from NatureBridge \(Yosemite Valley\).](#)



Visitors explore the past through historic images in the Yosemite Museum Gallery, 2010.



A Yosemite Conservancy educator leads an immersive Outdoor Adventures program in Yosemite Valley.



A concession interpreter invites families in Wawona to role play and learn more about Yosemite's wildlife.

**Long-Range
Interpretive Plan
for
Yosemite National Park**

**PART ONE:
FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING**

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

FEBRUARY 2012

Table of Contents

Comprehensive Interpretive Planning	17
Introduction to the Long-Range Interpretive Plan	19
Part One: Foundation for Planning	23
Park Purpose	24
Resource Significance	25
Interpretive Themes	28
Management Goals for Interpretation and Education	48
Visitation and Audience Characteristics	57
Audience Experience Goals	72
Employee and Visitor Safety	75
Interpretive Partner Roles and Responsibilities	77
Yosemite's Interpretive Management Team	83
Appendix A: Core Planning Team and Consultants	79
Appendix B: NPS Interpretation and Education Logic Model	81
Part Two: Recommendations for Yosemite's Interpretive and Educational Programming	
Yosemite Inspires the World	5
Issues Affecting Interpretation	7
Pattern of Recommendations	14
1. Reaching People in their Home Communities	15
2. Reaching People in Gateway Communities	21
3. Reaching People at Park Entrances and Boundaries	28
4. Reaching People at Yosemite's Key Destinations	31
5. General Operational Recommendations	47
Part Three: Annual Implementation Plan	
DVD: Foundation, Recommendations, and Interpretive Database	

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Funding for this project has been provided by
the [Sierra Nevada Conservancy](#), an agency of the State of California.

Comprehensive Interpretive Planning

The Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) for Yosemite is a vision for desired visitor experiences as well as a blueprint for the Division of Interpretation and Education's role in resource protection at the park. The CIP is comprised of three components:

- n **Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP)**
This five-to-ten-year plan is the backbone of the CIP and identifies existing and desired future conditions for Interpretation and Education in Yosemite.
- n **Annual Implementation Plan**
Following the mandates set forth in the LRIP, this annual implementation of recommendations fulfills the vision of the long-range plan.
- n **Interpretive Database**
This comprehensive database of planning documents, inventories, interpretive program outlines, research resources, volunteer program policies and operational resources and more is a critical resource for interpretive and educational operations in the park.

The CIP is meant to be a living work plan, used by interpreters, educators, managers, planners, designers, and anyone else with responsibility for sharing Yosemite's stories with the world. The CIP's foundational purpose is to facilitate people's connection with Yosemite and its cultural and natural resources, inspiring a life-long commitment to their stewardship and preservation. What follows is the heart of the CIP, the Long-Range Interpretive Plan.

NOTE: The DVD version of this plan contains enhanced content including the digital Interpretive Database along with audio, video, photographs and more that are meant to illustrate best practices and inspire creativity and innovation.

Introduction to the Long-Range Interpretive Plan

The purpose of Interpretation and Education in the National Park Service is to provide memorable, meaningful, and inspirational experiences related to the parks and strengthen public understanding of the full meaning and relevance of the nation's natural and cultural resources.

[NPS Interpretation and Education Business Plan, 2006](#)

In 1864, when the [Yosemite Grant](#) was signed by Abraham Lincoln, Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove became the first scenic natural areas to be set aside for public benefit and appreciation of landscape beauty, making Yosemite the inspiration and birthplace of the national park idea. Since that time, Yosemite has been a leader in protecting natural and cultural resources for the benefit and enjoyment of the people. Yosemite was among the first parks to use interpretation and education as a means to increase resource protection and visitor enjoyment.

Beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a number of individuals served as guides for visitors and promoters of Yosemite. Some were certainly purveyors of tall tales and misinformation; however, [John Muir](#) emerged as a model in interpreting the science, beauty, and necessity of Yosemite in a sincere, eloquent, and powerful way. His interpretations led others to not only more deeply understand Yosemite, but also to foster a sense of place and a responsibility to protect it. According to Muir:

*One day's exposure to mountains is better than cartloads of books.
See how willingly Nature poses herself upon photographers' plates.
No earthly chemicals are so sensitive as those of the human soul.*

Yosemite Park is a place of rest, a refuge from the roar and dust and weary, nervous, wasting work of the lowlands... This one noble park is big enough and rich enough for a whole life of study and aesthetic enjoyment. It is good for everybody, no matter how benumbed with care, encrusted with a mail of business habits like a tree with bark. None can escape its charms. Its natural beauty cleans and warms like a fire...



Government protection should be thrown around every wild grove and forest on the mountains, as it is around every private orchard, and the trees in public parks. To say nothing of their value as fountains of timber, they are worth infinitely more than all the gardens and parks of towns.

John Muir and editor Robert Underwood Johnson catalyzed the movement to create Yosemite National Park. Johnson encouraged Muir to write two magazine articles—one extolling the beauties of Yosemite, and the other documenting threats to the area. In 1890, less than a year after these articles were published, Congress set aside Yosemite National Park.

As the first director of a young National Park Service (NPS), Stephen T. Mather recognized the need to gain support for the preservation of parks—especially Yosemite. In 1919, he saw [nature guide activities](#) being conducted near Lake Tahoe by Dr. Harold C. Bryant (of the California Fish and Game Commission) and Dr. Loye Holms Miller (of University of California, Los Angeles). Mather realized they were just what the national parks needed and convinced them to start a nature guide service in Yosemite Valley. The following year, Bryant and Miller along with volunteer Enid Michael, began the Yosemite Free Nature Guide Service. National Park Service interpretation was born.

Over the past century, NPS interpreters in Yosemite provided a wide range of services. They have operated museums and visitor centers; provided walks, talks, hikes, Junior Ranger programs, High Sierra Loop Trips, Valley Floor Tours, snowshoe walks, cross-country ski trips, campfires, press conferences, and school curriculum-based experiences; and created exhibits, brochures, podcasts, videos, and more. Today the NPS Division of Interpretation and Education carries out its function through five operational branches—Education, Field Operations, Interpretive Services, Museum, and Volunteer Program. These operations are defined further in the Recommendations section of this plan.

In addition to the Division of Interpretation and Education, each NPS division in Yosemite supports interpretation, education, and volunteer opportunities for park visitors. Administrative employees greet the public and respond to inquiries. Fee collectors welcome visitors entering the park. Facilities workers interact with the public in more locations—such as roads, restrooms, and trails—than any other employees. Scientists and resource managers have opportunities to engage the public in hands-on restoration efforts and scientific discovery. Park planners and project managers interact with visitors and stakeholders to help inspire involvement in the park's public processes. Protection rangers strive to educate as a proactive measure to reduce the need for enforcement and rescue. All divisions engage volunteers in meeting operational goals and providing stewardship opportunities.

Non-governmental partners play an equally significant role in the park's interpretive and educational efforts. Park concessioners interact with millions of visitors annually and provide interpretive programs to enhance visitor experience. Non-profit support organizations such as the Yosemite Conservancy, NatureBridge, and Sierra Club provide significant funding, programming, and other support.

In a place as dynamic and dramatic as Yosemite, it is not surprising that the interpretive and educational operation is complex, combining the talents of federal, private, and non-profit organizations in providing opportunities for people to feel connected to this and all national parks. The first official interpretive programs in Yosemite were not offered by rangers, but rather by a partner, Yosemite Free Nature Guide Service. Interpretive partnership is simply the way interpretive and educational services are, and have always been, provided in Yosemite National Park. Therefore, partnership is infused throughout the plan.

Approximately four million people a year come to Yosemite in search of what each defines as a meaningful park experience. The challenge for park staff is understanding what experiences visitors desire; determining if these experiences are consistent with the NPS mission; and providing for such experiences in a safe and sustainable way. Regardless of what division or partner organization they work for, park interpreters and volunteers can skillfully and holistically collaborate to provide powerful connections and meaningful experiences for visitors. In this way, visitors who become acquainted with Yosemite will care about it and ultimately become caretakers of this special place.

The intent of this Long-Range Interpretive Plan is to provide vision and structure to move forward into the next era of interpretation, education, and visitor engagement at Yosemite National Park.

Foundation for Planning

Any planning effort in Yosemite is grounded in park purpose and significance, which are generated from the park's enabling legislation; subsequent legislation such as the Organic Act and Wilderness Act; and core planning documents, including the [1980 General Management Plan \(GMP\)](#).

Park purpose and significance guide the formation of interpretive themes, the storylines used by park interpreters to foster stewardship by creating opportunities for people to connect both intellectually and emotionally with park significance.

Finally, in order to plan effectively, interpreters must understand management goals, visitor needs and expectations, and critical issues facing interpretation and education now and in the future.

Based on the foundation of purpose, significance, themes, management goals, visitor needs, and critical issues, park managers can make more effective choices regarding the future condition of interpretive, educational, and stewardship programs in Yosemite. The first item to be defined in this section is park purpose.

Park Purpose

An [1864 act of Congress](#), signed by President Lincoln, granted the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove of Big Trees to the State of California stipulating that these lands “be held for public use, resort, and recreation... inalienable for all time.” This provided the initial guidance for the purpose and management of the Valley and the Grove. In 1890, Congress designated Yosemite National Park, charging the Secretary of the Interior with the responsibility of administering the park as a “forest reservation,” thus extending conservation to the wider Yosemite region. This act, however, excluded Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees, leaving them under state jurisdiction. The legislature of California receded Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees to the United States in 1905. [Congress accepted the state grant in 1906](#) and added these lands to Yosemite National Park.

The park’s legislative history and recent planning documents, specifically the [1980 General Management Plan \(GMP\)](#) and the 1994 draft *Statement for Management* (SFM), state that the park exists to:

- n Preserve both the resources and dynamic processes that contribute to Yosemite’s attractiveness including its scenic beauty, outstanding wilderness values, nearly full diversity of Sierra Nevada environments, evidence of the geologic processes that formed the Sierra Nevada, and cultural resources—both historic and prehistoric.
- n Make the varied resources of Yosemite available to people for their enjoyment, education, inspiration, and recreation in ways that are compatible with the Organic Act of the National Park Service (i.e., use them only in ways that “will leave them unimpaired” for future generations).

In these two statements, environment, natural resources, scenery, processes, and cultural resources are stated broadly and remain undefined. The following statements of resource significance expand upon these concepts.

Resource Significance

The following statements of resource significance are founded in park planning documents and processes including the General Management Plan and subsequent plans as well as public comment and scientific and historic research. These statements express why Yosemite is significant to American and world heritage today.

Yosemite National Park is significant because of:

- n **Outstanding scenery**—including peaks, canyons, cliffs, domes, rivers, immense waterfalls, meadows, wildlife, and forests.
- n **Its unique assemblage of massive granite domes and unique features, which resulted from a rich volcanic and glacial history.** Three of the largest exposed granite monoliths in the world are in Yosemite Valley.
- n **Three groves of giant sequoia trees**—including the first seen by Euro-Americans and the first to be protected by law.
- n **Its 704,624 acres of Wilderness** (94.45% of the park). Together with the national forests and other national parks in the Sierra Nevada, Yosemite is part of the second largest contiguous designated Wilderness in the lower 48 states.
- n [Two designated Wild and Scenic Rivers](#), the Tuolumne and the Merced, the upper watersheds of which are preserved within the park boundary.
- n [Tuolumne Meadows](#)—constituting the largest intact subalpine meadow complex in the Sierra Nevada that is accessible to the general public.
- n **Its varied natural systems**, which are gaining significance in the context of global population growth and its impacts on the environment. Yosemite is a vital living research laboratory, a sanctuary, and an example

of a relatively pristine natural environment, which holds particular significance in California—a state with more than 35 million people and rapid population growth.

- n **An exceptional diversity of living things** fostered by the park's broad elevation range, sequence of climate zones, and large size.
- n **The land preserved within the park that is part of the ancestral homeland of several contemporary American Indian tribes and groups.** Oral tradition and archeological evidence suggest humans have been living continuously in the Yosemite region for at least eight thousand years.
- n **Its distinction of being the first scenic natural area to be set aside by the United States for public benefit and appreciation of [landscape beauty](#).** Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove were the 1864 birthplace of the national park idea, which has spread throughout the world.
- n **Its history as a leader in park preservation, management, and partnerships.** Important elements include the role of the Army (including Buffalo Soldiers), the first female law enforcement ranger (1917), the formal institution of interpretation (1920), participation in the evolution of 150 years of public-use management, and the establishment of the first nonprofit stewardship partners in the National Park Service. Ongoing decision-making about Yosemite's management affects public land stewardship around the world.
- n **The birthplace of the National Park Service Rustic Style of architecture and numerous important [historic structures](#).** Yosemite was the home of the first NPS landscape design office providing design services for all parks in the west. Within the park, five structures are National Historic Landmarks; and more than 600 are considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, including three historic and 12 prehistoric archaeological districts.

- n **World Heritage Site designation** in 1984 as one of only 21 such internationally recognized locales in the United States.
- n **Yosemite Valley and [Camp 4](#)'s role in the history of big wall climbing** and the development of climbing techniques and equipment, which spread worldwide.

In sum, resource significance statements describe tangible objects, events, processes, and ideas that are preserved in Yosemite. The next step in interpretive planning is to expand these statements into interpretive themes.

Interpretive Themes

Primary interpretive themes translate the park’s significance statements into a variety of compelling storylines. These primary park themes describe ideas, concepts, or messages about Yosemite and provide the broadest opportunities for visitors and audiences to make personal connections to the meanings and significance of the park. At their best, primary themes relate a significant tangible element of the park to a universal concept—those resource meanings that are most widely felt and understood. These themes provide guidelines for making decisions concerning interpretive stories to be told, methods to be used, and facilities and activities required for telling those stories. Primary themes may not include every topic interpreted, but the universal concepts they contain should directly support understanding of the park’s significance. All interpretive efforts, including media and personal services, will relate to one or more primary interpretive themes. Some examples of related secondary themes follow each main theme statement. These are not meant to be all-inclusive, rather to provide examples of more specific themes that might be built from the foundations of each primary theme.



Keith Walklet

[“Yosemite Falls Spring Flow”](#)

- 1. Yosemite’s beauty draws people from all over the world and from all walks of life and can bring a sense of peace, serenity, and tranquility—a welcome respite from the pressure and stresses of everyday life.**

The spectacular scenic features of Yosemite, and of Yosemite Valley in particular, inspired a spiritual connection to the land for American Indians, settlers, and newcomers. These connections continue to compel people to care for this place in many ways.

Yosemite’s scenery excites the imagination of people around the world, inspiring artistic expressions that bring others to care about Yosemite National Park as well as other wild places.



[Granite, Upper Merced River Canyon](#)

2. The complex and dynamic geologic processes in Yosemite create an unusually diverse and changing landscape, which yields world-class scenery and opportunities for significant scientific research.

The immense geologic features of Yosemite evoke a sense of mystery that inspires people to reach for explanations, both religious and scientific.

The geologic features of Yosemite National Park reveal many chapters in the history of the Earth with spectacular examples of mountain building and the effects of glaciation.



[Mariposa Grove](#)

3. Giant sequoias offer opportunities for sharing Yosemite-related stories, including the inspiration to create the Yosemite Grant, the preservation of unique places, survival, and the wonder of living things so old and so large.

Giant sequoias have survived for thousands of years—experiencing fires, climate change, and the impact of humans. The continued survival of these inspiring trees depends on further scientific study and the preservation of the environment in which they live, including critical hydrologic conditions and frequent fire.

More than one-third of the world's population of giant sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) has been logged. Yosemite protects three of the approximately 75 groves that still exist worldwide.

Giant sequoias stir the imagination because they are beautiful, enormous, and ancient—some surviving more than 2,000 years, through many generations of humanity and monumental historical events.



[“Stream of Orange, Sierra Crest”](#)

4. The concept of wilderness originated in the United States with the conviction that some wildland resources are most valuable to Americans when natural process are allowed to prevail. Yosemite Wilderness is managed to retain its primitive character so that it can remain a special place for people to examine their relationships to the natural world.

Yosemite Wilderness offers opportunities for personal health and renewal, adventure, challenge, inspiration, artistic expression, and the prospect of hope for the future.

As a foundation for healthy and diverse ecosystems, Yosemite Wilderness and other remaining wild lands provide critical habitat for rare and endangered species and play a significant role in the overall health of natural systems worldwide.

The survival of wilderness depends on individual and societal commitment to the idea of wilderness and on appropriate visitor use and behavior.

Yosemite Wilderness, while providing for personal fulfillment, has inherent risks associated with weather, terrain, water, wildlife, and other natural elements; and while visitor safety cannot be guaranteed, it can be enhanced with proper trip planning, adequate skill, and responsible behavior.

The preservation of the terrestrial Yosemite Wilderness also provides for preservation of beautiful night skies, allowing for a deeper understanding of the cultural and natural stories of the night sky.



Charles Cramer

5. Just as national parks tell the stories of the nation, Wild and Scenic rivers include the country’s natural and cultural heritage along their banks and within their flowing waters.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act preserves designated rivers in their free-flowing condition for the benefit of people today and for future generations.

People have developed powerful and enduring relationships with Yosemite’s rivers. These rivers and surrounding lands have figured prominently in the lives, stories, and traditions of generations of American Indians, local residents, and visitors.

Both the Tuolumne to the north (designated by Congress as Wild and Scenic in 1984) and the Merced to the south (designated in 1987) find their origins on the shoulders of Mount Lyell. Along with their forks and major tributaries, these two wild rivers span the park with 140 miles of cumulative corridor between the Sierra crest and the Sierra foothills, forming the foundation for diverse ecological communities.

[“Cascade Detail, Tuolumne River, below Waterwheel Fall”](#)



Keith Walklet

“Tuolumne River from Wildcat Peak”

6. For more than 6,000 years, people have engaged directly with the Tuolumne River, its meadows, and surrounding granite domes. Layers of human history communicate stories of Tuolumne as a place of inspiration, debate, and spiritual renewal.

The subalpine meadow system in Tuolumne supports an exceptional diversity of habitat types for plant and animal species, including migratory birds and special-status plant, amphibian, and bat species. Unusually large basins of alluvial fill, perennially high groundwater, seasonal flooding, and active channel migrations combine to sustain some of the most extensive subalpine meadow/wetland complexes in the Sierra Nevada.

A glacially-carved, snow-capped landscape, through which the Tuolumne River meanders across Tuolumne Meadows, creates magnificent scenery with a distinctive character that people equate with the Tuolumne River corridor. The wide-open meadows allow for magnificent skyward views, including some of the best views of dark night skies and emerging daytime thunderstorms in the Sierra Nevada.

Historic sites in Tuolumne Meadows commemorate the significance of this place inspiring conservation activism on a national scale.

Tuolumne Meadows is renowned not only as a rustic staging area and departure point for Yosemite high-country adventure, but also as a point of reconnection between people and their natural and cultural heritage. A wide range of recreational opportunities attracts people of various ages and abilities to Tuolumne Meadows, where many individuals, families, and groups establish long-lasting ties with the area.



[Pika \(*Ochotona princeps*\), a high elevation Yosemite resident.](#)

7. Yosemite’s pristine natural environments provide for an exceptional diversity of living things and serve as a vital living research laboratory.

Yosemite’s varied elevations, with wide-ranging vegetation types, specific habitats, differing geological history, and extraordinary hydrology, provide a wealth of possibilities for scientific research on many subjects, such as climate change, fire effects, and wildlife.

Yosemite provides a sanctuary for fascinating and complex plant and animal communities that provide opportunities for enjoying nature’s diverse beauty and expanding one’s love of life.

The Yosemite fire landscape continues to evolve as global systems change. People have become a critical link in this dynamic system; while many plant and animal species, including several of special concern, rely on fire for their ongoing health.

Yosemite’s wildlife, large and small, have created homes within the park’s broad range of habitats and provide opportunities for greater understanding of their place in the web of life. For example, to native people, bears hold deep spiritual value, while to many they symbolize wilderness; the pika provides a means to understand local implications of global climate change; and yellow-legged frog populations have been dramatically declining due to human influence.

Human-caused impacts—including the introduction of non-native species, climate change, land development, and exposure to high visitor use—threaten biological diversity and must be managed to promote the survival of native species.



Keith Walklet

[Julia Parker, demonstrates the art of acorn preparation in the Yosemite Museum.](#)

8. While living in or traveling through the region now called Yosemite National Park, numerous American Indian groups traded resources, exchanged knowledge, and sometimes intermarried—traditions that continue to this day.

By learning how Yosemite Indian ancestors lived, loved, worshiped, cared for their children, and faced death, visitors may gain insights into the human condition while honoring the ancient people of Yosemite and their own past.

American Indians were the original stewards of the land that is now Yosemite and continue to care for this place today. Traditionally, American Indians relied on natural resources such as black oak and sedges, which compelled them to periodically burn meadows and forests to maintain a balance favoring the group's survival needs, including foods, medicines, and basket materials.

To American Indians, many of Yosemite's iconic features have deep spiritual and historic significance, which is preserved through the oral tradition of passing stories from one generation to the next.



Yosemite Research Library

President Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir near Glacier Point, May 1903.

9. Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove were the first globally recognized scenic natural areas to be set aside by any government for public benefit and appreciation of landscape beauty, making Yosemite the birthplace of the national park idea, which has spread throughout the world.

Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove are geographically small, but they nurtured ideas whose boundaries cannot be marked on a map. They are more than just places; they provide space for journeys that are historical and philosophical as well as physical.

During a time of extraordinary hardship for the country, President Abraham Lincoln made 1864 a year to remember not only for the Civil War, but for what many since then have called “the greatest idea America ever had”—national parks.



Auto caravan, June 1941.

10. The post-1850 cultural story in Yosemite provides abundant opportunities to reflect upon the history of tourism, preservation, management, and the development of a National Park Service ethic.

The words, phrases, and ideas supporting the establishment of Yosemite as a protected area echo in enabling legislation for subsequent national parks all over the world. In this way, Yosemite has influenced the protection, preservation, and enjoyment of special places worldwide.

Military stewardship by the U.S. Cavalry—including that of Buffalo Soldiers of Yellowstone, Sequoia, and Yosemite—established a working model of wilderness and national park management that was influential in developing the character and mystique of the national park ranger.

By authorizing the first female law enforcement ranger in 1917 and hiring the first female ranger naturalist in 1921, Yosemite took the lead in challenging a male-dominated profession by asserting that women could play a significant role in the protection and preservation of national parks.

The Yosemite Conservancy (formerly The Yosemite Association, Yosemite Natural History Association, and originally the Yosemite Museum Association) was created in 1923 as the first nonprofit partner of the National Park Service to support, benefit, and promote Yosemite; thus starting a legacy of partnership and public/private philanthropy in the National Park System.

The battle over Hetch Hetchy in the early 1900s brought a national audience into the debate over the controversial and competing claims of wild and scenic lands versus development, for the first time in the American experience.



Yosemite Research Library

Yosemite Museum cornerstone ceremony, Stephen Mather (pictured on right) and Ansel Hall, 1924.

11. It was in Yosemite that the first NPS designers developed a unique architectural style for park structures. The Yosemite Museum, The Ahwahnee Hotel, and the [Rangers' Club](#) are all early examples of the Rustic Style of architecture that later became synonymous with NPS architecture. The rustic architecture style can be seen across the country due to the NPS oversight of the Civilian Conservation Corps and development of parks nationwide.

Yosemite's cultural landscape reflects the evolution of human needs and values over time from Indian villages, to mining sheds and lumber mills, to orchards and wheat fields, to campgrounds and lodges.

The variety of historic visitor-service structures in the park offers evidence that Yosemite is a park for visitors of diverse socio-economic backgrounds and desired experiences in an environment that embraces the protection of natural resources.

The evolution of park structures reflects the evolution of Yosemite visitors' interaction with the landscape.



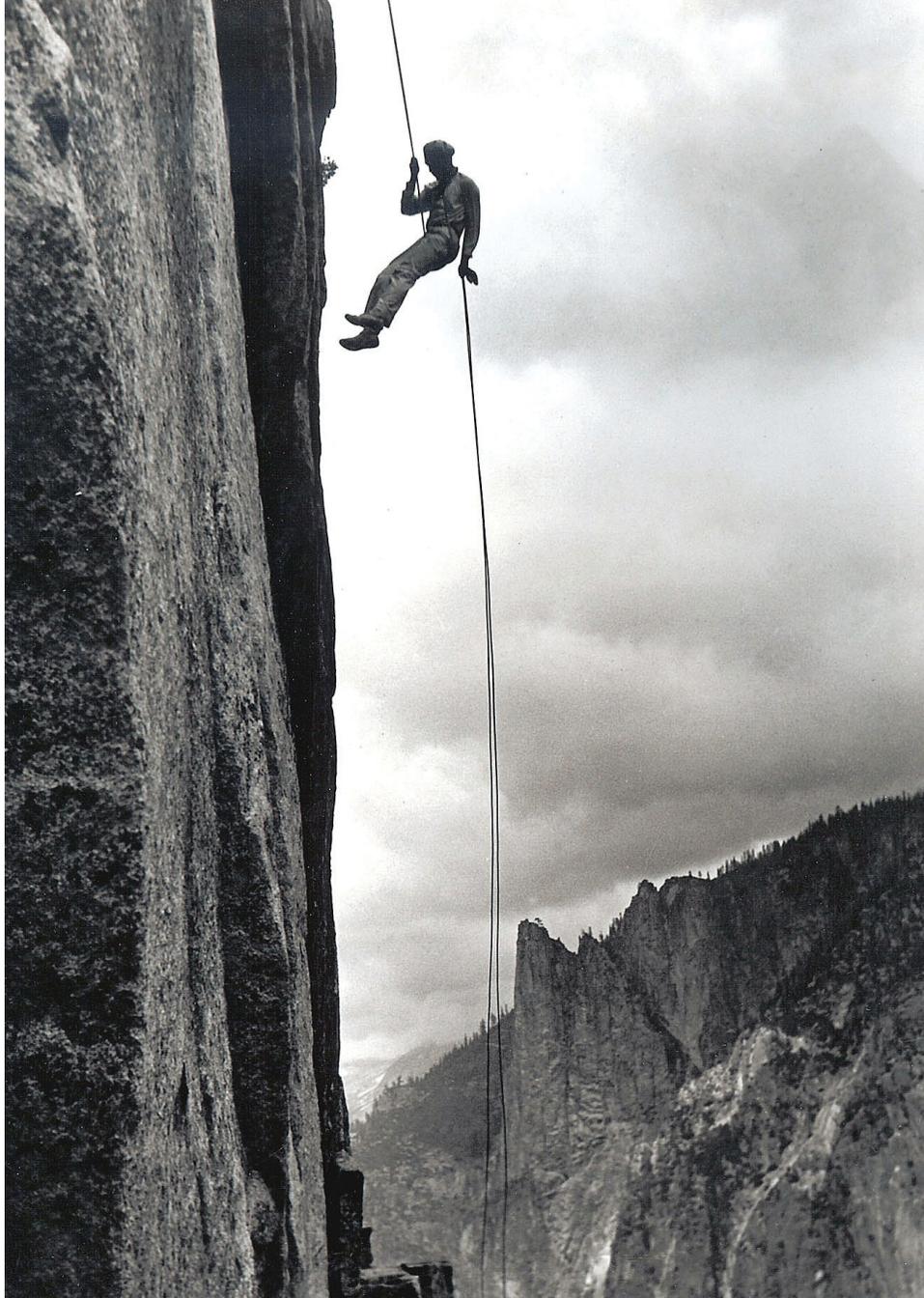
Charles Cramer

"Half Dome Moon"

12. Designation as a World Heritage Site globally recognizes Yosemite as a place of outstanding value to humanity and provides an opportunity for international collaboration and exchange.

The World Heritage distinction invites the world's citizens to experience Yosemite and its universally appealing values. One out of five visitors is from another nation, demonstrating the park's global attraction and importance.

The World Heritage Site listing connects Yosemite to points well beyond its boundaries, around the country and the world. Yosemite has an important relationship with the other 20 World Heritage Sites in the U.S. as well as valuable connections to [sister parks](#) in Chile and China, which are also World Heritage Sites.



Jules Eichorn rappelling off of Lower Cathedral Spire, 1936.

13. The connection between climbers and Yosemite is historical, physical, and spiritual. [Rock climbing](#) immerses people in this place, which can promote appropriate, sustainable, and direct connections to Yosemite.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its significant association with the growth and development of rock climbing, Camp 4 has provided a place for the climbing community to foster ingenuity, creativity, and perseverance; which has led to many advances in climbing technique and technology.

Climbing in Yosemite embodies the passion and spirit of adventure that has led countless people to hike, backpack, explore, and climb in this wild national park. The inspiring nature of climbing also compels thousands of visitors to watch and admire Yosemite's climbers in action.

Climbing is an outgrowth of the human spirit of exploration, challenge, adventure, competition, and courage; which, for some, leads to a strong sense of place, spiritual (or peak) experiences, self actualization, and ultimately to a profound sense of stewardship.

While only a small fraction of Yosemite's search-and-rescue incidents involve climbers, the advent of big wall climbing in Yosemite gave rise to a world-class Search-and-Rescue (SAR) unit, which continues today.

While focusing on the significance of Yosemite resources and primary interpretive themes, there are additional needs to consider in making choices about interpretive programs and products. Interpretation can engage new audiences, assist in providing safe experiences for park visitors, as well as communicate resource protection and stewardship. These additional purposes for interpretation are defined by management goals.

Management Goals for Interpretation and Education in Yosemite

Interpretation and Education is one of eight NPS Divisions in Yosemite National Park—along with Administration, Business and Revenue Management, Facilities Management, Planning, Project Management, Resources Management and Science, and Visitor and Resource Protection. Every division is critical to successful interpretation of park resources, and interpretation is often an effective tool to help other divisions achieve their goals. The leaders of these divisions, along with the superintendent’s staff, comprise the park’s leadership team. This group, with input from and consultation with affiliated tribes, crafted these goals for interpretation.

The foundation that supports Yosemite’s Management Goals for Interpretation and Education is established in the [1980 General Management Plan](#), 2005 *NPS Strategic Management Plan* and [Yosemite’s 2020 Strategic Vision](#). Overlaid are the goals of other NPS and partner staff, guiding the direction of all park interpretation over the next decade. The goals below address and are organized within the four Emphasis Areas identified in the parks *2020 Strategic Vision* – Visitor Experience & Partnerships, Resource Protection & Education, Leadership, and Management & Organization. The Recommendations of this LRIP will help the park achieve the goals set forth in the eight Action Plans identified in the *2020 Strategic Vision*.

Visitor Experience & Partnerships

Interpretation and Education in Yosemite exists to:

- n Assist all people in understanding, enjoying, and contributing to the preservation of the natural, cultural, and scenic resources of Yosemite.
- n Reach out to and engage [diverse audiences](#), including those who may never visit.
- n [Orient](#), inform, provide personalized assistance, and offer comprehensive trip planning for visitors that addresses the variety of opportunities the park offers.
- n Engage visitors in outdoor exploration and provide a variety of opportunities for them to connect directly with nature in the park.
- n Provide appropriate types and levels of interpretive services that offer opportunities for intellectual and emotional connections to the natural and cultural significance of Yosemite for visitors with a broad range of interests.
- n Provide interpretive services that support park management in maintaining a safe, functional, and orderly environment for visitors.
- n Offer high-quality [curriculum-based education](#) programming.
- n Engage in continuous learning about park resources and audiences, as well as audience incentives/barriers to connecting with Yosemite, in order to continue improving interpretive services.
- n Continuously collaborate and share [information and training](#) with Yosemite’s interpretive partners to provide consistent, balanced, and accurate information and messages to park audiences.
- n Support partner efforts to achieve economic sustainability through membership, revenue generation, mission awareness, volunteerism, and philanthropy—all of which support stewardship opportunities in Yosemite.

- n Understand local history, business interests, and community concerns, and involve Yosemite as a [collaborative partner](#) in the region.
- n Work with park Indian cultural liaison to involve culturally associated tribes and the public in park management, from participation in planning decisions to the development of interpretive programs and products that tell their stories accurately.
- n Enhance quality partnerships through serving as primary park liaison to Yosemite Conservancy, NatureBridge, and Sierra Club at LeConte Memorial Lodge.

Resource Protection & Education

Interpretation and Education in Yosemite exists to:

- n Acquire, preserve, and protect valuable museum and archive resources and their documentation and utilize them to inspire understanding and appreciation of [park stories](#).
- n Coordinate and serve as a clearinghouse for park efforts to engage youth in outdoor exploration, science education, and work experience, which encourages a sense of place, a love of national parks, a healthy lifestyle, and a lifelong stewardship ethic.
- n Preserve and protect park resources by offering interpretive opportunities for visitors and staff to experience the park with minimum impact.
- n [Inspire audiences to take action](#) by helping them understand that resource preservation concerns relate to broader environmental issues that reach beyond park boundaries, such as population growth, climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, air quality, and others.
- n Provide opportunities for, and awareness of, stewardship activities both in Yosemite and in visitors' local communities.

Management & Organization

Interpretation and Education in Yosemite exists to:

- n Train and educate frontline Yosemite staff from all divisions, other agencies, and park partners so that visitors receive accurate and timely information and messages from all park representatives.
- n Assume a leadership role in facilitating internal communication during incidents and parkwide emergencies.
- n Serve as park spokespeople, supplementing the Public Affairs staff as needed, communicating with the public about Yosemite events, projects, and plans.
- n Serve as a clearinghouse and support system for park- and partner-produced publications and other interpretive media.

Leadership

Interpretation and Education in Yosemite exists to:

- n Support, enhance, and teach about Yosemite's position as an environmental leader.
- n Support and assist international park development and cooperation, primarily through serving as Yosemite's [sister park](#) liaison to Parque Nacionale Torres del Paine in Chile.
- n [Support regional](#) and national initiatives through leadership participation on region-wide and service-wide project teams and work groups in areas of expertise.

The above Yosemite National Park Management Goals directly support national, regional, and park strategic planning goals. Below are select goals from five such documents that directly affect the goals above and the recommendations of this plan.

[A Call to Action: Preparing for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement \(2011\)](#)

- n Develop and nurture life-long connections between the public—especially young people—and parks through a continuum of engaging recreational, educational, volunteer, and work experiences.
- n Welcome and engage diverse communities through culturally relevant park stories and experiences that are accessible to all.
- n Strengthen the NPS as an education institution and parks as places of learning that develop American values, civic engagement and citizen stewardship.
- n Utilize leading-edge technologies and social media to effectively communicate with and capture the interest of the public.
- n Expand the benefits of NPS education programs and services through collaboration with partners and education institutions at all levels.
- n Achieve a standard of excellence in cultural and natural resource stewardship that serves as a model throughout the country.
- n Connect communities to urban parks, trails, waterways and community green spaces that give people access to fun outdoor experiences close to home.
- n Expand the use of parks as places for healthy outdoor recreation which contributes to people’s physical, mental, and social well-being.

2005 NPS Strategic Management Plan

- n **Mission Goal Ia:**
Natural and cultural resources and associated values are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.

- n **Mission Goal Ib:**
The National Park Service contributes to the knowledge about natural and cultural resources and their associated values; management decisions about resources and visitors are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.
- n **Mission Goal IIa:**
Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.
- n **Mission Goal IIb:**
Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.
- n **Mission Goal IIIa:**
Natural and cultural resources are conserved through formal partnership programs.
- n **Mission Goal IIIb:**
Through partnerships with other federal, state, and local agencies (including tribal governments) and nonprofit organizations, a nationwide system of parks, open space, rivers, and trails provides educational, recreational, and conservation benefits for the American people.
- n **Mission Goal IVa:**
The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.
- n **Mission Goal IVb:**
The National Park Service increases its managerial capabilities through initiatives and support from other agencies, organizations, and individuals.

NPS Interpretation and Education Renaissance Action Plan

- n Engage People to Make Enduring Connections to America's Special Places. The demographics of the American population are changing drastically. It is critically important that national park audiences reflect the face of a richly diverse nation. Everyone must feel welcome at national parks, and everyone must see their own heritage reflecting the stories and meanings interpreted at national parks. Yosemite must work to engage traditionally under-served audiences such as African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, new immigrants, and low-income urban and rural audiences.
- n Use New Technology. Changing technology is profoundly impacting the way people communicate, learn, find community, express themselves, and find and process information. To fully embrace 21st-century audiences, national parks must use new media and current technologies to interpret park resources, without abandoning traditional methods and techniques. Yosemite must ensure that its menu of interpretive opportunities includes new and currently used technologies.
- n Embrace Interpretation and Education Partners. It is clear that with ever-growing audiences, and ever-dwindling budgets and personnel, the only way to meet the demand and need for fully serving park audiences is to work closely with partners. To meet the needs of park audiences both on site and at a distance, the NPS must continue to engage with and facilitate interpretive and educational activity by and through partners.
- n Develop and Implement Professional Standards. These are currently under development. When complete, it will be essential for Yosemite to evaluate its program and adjust to meet the national standards.

- n Create a Culture of Evaluation.

In this time of scarce resources, it is critical to make decisions based on what works and what audiences want. To accomplish this, parks must start to conduct evaluations and learn from evaluative and research data produced throughout the system and the interpretive field in general. Park management should consider the outcomes of their interpretive and educational program and create a plan for collecting and using evaluation information on a regular basis for making decisions and for ongoing program improvement.

NPS Interpretation and Education Program Business Plan

- n Create Interpretation and Education core function statements and operating standards.
- n Commit to staffing levels that support core function and operating standards.
- n Develop a more effective and comprehensive inventory of interpretation and education practitioners and data collection system.
- n Leverage partnership relationships.
- n Add volunteer coordinators.
- n Create a distance-learning platform.
- n Simplify the Peer Review Certification Program and require certification of NPS employees.
- n Evaluate interpretation and education program effectiveness.
- n Study National Park Service audiences.
- n Create interpretation and education technology strategy.
- n Upgrade interpretive media.
- n Sustain and enhance an informed leadership.
- n Fund interpretive planning.
- n Embrace efforts to create a culture of philanthropy.

Pacific West Region's Interpretation and Education Strategic Plan 2016:

- n **Oceans:** Engage visitors, partners, and communities to become active ocean stewards.
- n **Climate change:** Immediately engage all people to daily transform their impact on the planet to reduce their carbon footprint and become more climate-friendly.
- n **Engaging youth:** Release the power of the parks to invigorate youth to embrace the heritage of our country and health of the planet through a revitalization of citizenship and science.
- n **Bold & positive leadership:** Embrace the Interpretation and Education Renaissance through bold positive leadership to stimulate strategic changes in how we do business.
- n **NPS Centennial:** Demonstrate exemplary environmental leadership and provide experiential opportunities that empower diverse communities to care for America's Treasures beyond 2016.

Key to achieving these management goals is a thorough understanding of our audiences. Yosemite has recently stepped up its efforts to find out more about park visitors, and those findings are outlined in the following pages.

Visitation & Audience Characteristics

Knowledge of audience is key tenet of successful interpretation. It is also core to providing quality customer service and outstanding visitor experiences. By understanding visitor demographics, use patterns, and desires, the park can create far more effective interpretive and educational experiences, thus fostering greater caring for park resources.

Table 1. [Annual Park Visits](#)

YEAR	VISITS
1998	3,657,132
1999	3,493,607
2000	3,400,903
2001	3,368,731
2002	3,361,867
2003	3,378,664
2004	3,280,911
2005	3,304,144
2006	3,242,644
2007	3,503,428
2008	3,431,514
2009	3,737,472
2010	4,047,880
2011	4,098,648

Table 2. Monthly Visits—2009

MONTH	VISITS
January	101,984
February	78,795
March	132,711
April	230,828
May	399,683
June	483,382
July	586,591
August	643,300
September	471,530
October	346,826
November	151,297
December	110,545

Source: NPS Public Use Statistics Office

Visitor Studies

Yosemite's Division of Resources Management and Science, Branch of Visitor Use and Social Science (VUSS) provides critical information about the needs and desires of park visitors. The park continually conducts visitor-use studies to understand the multi-faceted dimensions of visitation and the visitor experience that the park offers. In some cases this information supports interpretive operations already in place, while some information points in a new direction.

In 2005, VUSS worked with the NPS Visitor Services Project to conduct a survey on visitors to Yosemite. A follow-up study of winter users was completed in 2008 and another summer study in 2009. The results from these three surveys provide insight into visitor characteristics, as well as serve as a comparison between summer and winter seasons. These studies provide a wealth of data that will inform recommendations made throughout this plan.

The Visitor Study, Summer 2005 report describes the results of the study at Yosemite National Park during July 8–17, 2005. A total of 1,204 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 781 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 65% response rate (Littlejohn et al. 2006).

The Visitor Study, Winter 2008 report describes the results of the study at Yosemite National Park during February 2–10, 2008. A total of 938 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 563 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 60% response rate (Le et al. 2008).

The Visitor Study, Summer 2009 report describes the results of the study at Yosemite National Park during July 8–14, 2009. A total of 1,219 questionnaires were distributed to visitor groups. Of those, 689 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 58.5% response rate (Blotkamp et al. 2009).

Yosemite National Park visitors are profiled in the following summaries and graphs. Complete survey results are available at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/naturescience/visitor-use.htm>.

Composition

Summer, 2005

Thirty-six percent of visitor groups were in groups of two, and 32% were in groups of three or four, and 27% were groups of five or more. Sixty-three percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Forty-six percent of visitors were ages 36–60 years and 17% were ages 15 or younger.

United States visitors were from California (69%), Texas (4%), and 39 other states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. International visitors, comprising 18% of the total visitation, were from England (23%), France (11%), and 35 other countries.

Forty-eight percent of visitors surveyed visited Yosemite National Park for the first time. Thirty percent of visitors (16 years or older) had a bachelor's degree, 25% had a graduate degree, and 24% had some college.

Winter, 2008

Fifty percent of visitor groups were in groups of two, and 25% were in groups of three or four. Sixty percent of the visitor groups were family groups. Fifty-nine percent of visitors were ages 31–65 years and 17% were ages 15 or younger.

United States visitors were from California (89%), and smaller proportions were from other states. International visitors comprised 9% of the total visitation, with 9% each from Germany, Korea, Taiwan, and United Kingdom. Smaller proportions came from 20 other countries.

Twenty-six percent of visitors surveyed visited Yosemite National Park for the first time, and 55% had visited four or more times.

Summer, 2009

Thirty-five percent of visitor groups were in groups of two, and 31% were in groups of three or four. Sixty-nine percent of the visitor groups were family

groups. Thirty-seven percent of visitors were ages 41–60 years and 19% were ages 15 or younger.

United States visitors were from California (62%) with smaller proportions from 42 other states. International visitors, comprising 25% of the total visitation, were from England (14%), Germany (13%), and 31 other countries.

Hispanic or Latino visitors comprised 11% of visitation during the survey period. Most visitors (88%) were White, and 11% were Asian.

Activities

Summer, 2005

Visiting Yosemite National Park was the primary reason that brought 75% of visitor groups to the area (within 50 miles of the park). On this visit, the most common activities were sightseeing/taking a scenic drive (87%), visiting visitor center (55%), eating in park restaurant (49%), and day hiking (48%). Other activities significant to interpretive planning include paint/draw/photograph (45%), view wildlife/bird watching (38%), view wayside exhibits (35%), visit museum (27%), and attend ranger-led programs (8%).

Winter, 2008

For 67% of visitors, interest in seeing Yosemite scenery in wintertime was the most common factor affecting their decision to visit the park. On this visit, the most common activities were sightseeing/taking a scenic drive (84%), taking photographs/painting/drawing (73%), and day hiking (35%).

Summer, 2009

Visiting Yosemite National Park was the primary reason that brought 79% of the visitor groups to the area (within 50 miles of the park). On this visit, the most common activities were viewing scenery (93%), taking a scenic drive (64%), day hiking (54%), eating in a park restaurant (46%), and visiting visitor center (45%). Other activities significant to interpretive planning include wildlife viewing/bird-watching (43%), shopping in visitor center bookstore (37%), creative arts (26%), visiting museum (24%), attending ranger-led programs (13%), and nature study (7%).

No differences were apparent between the 2005 and 2008 studies in visitor groups who attended ranger-led programs (Note: a distinction is not made in the study between programs led by NPS rangers versus park partners and many visitors do not distinguish between the two). In both the summer 2005 and winter 2008 studies, 8% of visitors attended these programs. Though the overall number of ranger-led programs is higher in the summer, the proportion of visitors who participate in these programs is consistent across seasons and years. In summer 2009, there was an increase to 13%.

Services and Facilities

In regard to use, importance, and quality of visitor services and facilities, it is important to note the number of visitor groups who responded to each question. In the examples that follow, the “N” represents the number of individuals or visitor groups that responded to the question.

Summer, 2005

The most-used information service/facility (by 708 visitor groups) was the park brochure/map (90%). The information service/facility that received the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” quality ratings was ranger-led walks/talks (91%, N=51).

The most-used visitor and concession service/facility (by 726 visitor groups) was directional signs in park (91%). The services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings were campgrounds (95%, N=111), in-park lodging (95%, N=104), and roads (95%, N=610).

Winter, 2008

The most-used information service/facility (by 487 visitor groups) was the park brochure/map (80%). The information services/facilities that received the highest combined proportions of “very good” and “good” quality ratings were indoor exhibits (91%, N=108) and ranger-led walks/talks (91%, N=32).

The most-used visitor and concession service/facility (by 551 visitor groups) was roads (90%). The services/facilities that received the highest combined

proportions of “extremely important” and “very important” ratings were roads (96%, N=479), in-park lodging (90%, N=153), and trails (89%, N=185).

Summer, 2009

The most-used information service/facility was the park brochure/map (87% in summer).

The most-used visitor and concession services/facilities were roads (91%) and directional signs in park (89%). Most visitor groups (92%) rated the overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities at Yosemite as “very good” or “good.” Less than two percent of visitor groups rated the overall quality as “very poor” or “poor.”

Information Sources Prior to Visit

In each survey, 92% or more of visitors obtained information prior to their visit.

Table 3. Information Sources Prior to Visit

SOURCE	SUMMER 2005	WINTER 2008	SUMMER 2009
Previous visits	57 %	74 %	50 %
Word of mouth	45	41	46
NPS park website	40	52	51
Travel guides/books	38	23	44
Maps/brochures	34	30	39

Looking at the visitor studies, pre-trip use of the official NPS park website is increasing. In 2005, 40% of visitors reported using the NPS park website. In 2008, 52% of visitors and 2009, 51%, used the NPS park website. Not surprisingly, this increase is consistent with the overall increase in computer usage in the country. As more individuals have access to the Internet, web use for travel and recreation information will continue to rise.

Length of Visit

Summer, 2005

Forty-five percent of visitor groups spent eight or more hours in the park; 28% spent up to four hours; and 22% spent five or six hours.

Winter, 2008

Fifty percent of visitor groups spent six or more hours in the park; 29% spent four to five hours; and 9% spent two to three hours.

Summer, 2009

The average length of stay for visitor groups who spent less than 24 hours was 7.2 hours. The average length of stay for visitor groups who spent more than 24 hours was 3.9 days.

Comparison of Methods of Learning on a Visit

Most methods of learning were consistent between the summer and winter visitors. However, more visitors used trail guides in the summer of 2005 (31% of visitors) than in the winter of 2008 (24% of visitors).

Slight modifications to the outdoor exhibit questions were made between the 2005 and 2008 questionnaires. In 2005 and 2009, both 'trailside exhibits' (24% and 31% of visitor groups) and 'roadside' or 'outdoor exhibits' (25% and 27% of visitor groups) were included in Information Services and Facilities Used. In 2008, only 'outdoor exhibits' (11% of visitor groups) was listed on the questionnaire.

Table 4. Most Important Information Learned on this Visit – 2005 Summer Only

TOPIC	NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUMMER 2005
Bear safety	65
History	51
Geology	42
Park protection	39
Natural beauty	35
Sequoias	27
Crowding	20
Nature	18
Wayfinding information	15
Size of park	15

Table 5. Methods of Learning on this Visit 2005 Summer Only

SOURCE	SUMMER 2005
Park newspaper, maps, brochures	48
Travel guides/tour books	43
Internet websites	36
Wayside exhibits	34
Printed trail guides	31
Indoor exhibits	20
A/V programs	19
Roving rangers	16
Ranger-guided walks/ programs	12

Table 6. Preferred Methods of Learning on Future Visits – 2005 Summer and 2008 Winter Only

SOURCE	SUMMER 2005	WINTER 2008
Internet websites	59 %	52 %
Other printed materials	57	67
Travel guides/tour books	52	62
Printed trail guides	46	–
Wayside exhibits	41	59
Ranger-guided programs	36	–
Roving rangers	34	–
A/V programs	34	27
Indoor exhibits	24	51

Table 7. Preferred Interpretive Programs/ Information Services for Future Visits – 2008 Winter & 2009 Summer Only

SOURCE	WINTER 2008	SUMMER 2009
Printed materials	67 %	68 %
Self-guided tours	62	45
Outdoor exhibits	59	43
Park website	52	64
Indoor exhibits	51	32
Trailside exhibits	–	48
Audiovisual programs/ films, movies, slideshows	27	34
Special events	26	16
Living history/costumed interpretive programs	26	16
Electronic media/devices available to visitors	14	–
Interactive computer programs/ tours	10	–
Volunteer opportunities	10	9

Table 8. Top Ten Visitor Information Services and Facilities Used

SOURCE	SUMMER 2005	WINTER 2008	SUMMER 2009
Park brochure/map	90 %	80 %	87 %
Yosemite Guide	78	62	73
Shuttle bus service	48	27	43
Assistance from park staff	38	45	41
NPS park website	36	39	40
Trail guides	33	24	34
Roadside/outside exhibits	25	11	27
Museum/indoor exhibits	24	23	23
Trailside exhibits	24	–	31
Sales items at bookstore	15	–	24

Table 9. Importance of Visitor Information Services and Facilities

Percent Rated Very or Extremely Important

SERVICE/FACILITY	SUMMER 2005	WINTER 2008	SUMMER 2009
Shuttle Bus	81 %	82 %	84 %
Park brochure/map	78	76	84
Trail guides	77	83	91
NPS park website	74	81	83
Assistance from park staff	74	79	83
Ranger-led walks	70	78	71
Yosemite Guide	67	70	78
Roadside/outdoor exhibits	56	56	62
Trailside exhibits	55	–	60
Museum/indoor exhibits	47	53	45
Sales items at bookstore	34	28	42

Table 10. Combined Proportions of “Very Good” and “Good” Quality Ratings for Information Services and Facilities

Percent Rated Very Good or Good

SERVICE/FACILITY	SUMMER 2005	WINTER 2008	SUMMER 2009
Ranger-led walks/talks	91 %	91 %	91 %
Park brochure/map	85	87	85
Yosemite Guide	84	88	84
Indoor exhibits	–	91	82
Outdoor exhibits	–	83	74
Roadside exhibits	81	–	–
Trail guides	80	79	78
Trailside exhibits	78	–	81
NPS park website	75	75	80
Museum exhibits	68	–	–

Table 11. Top Ten Sites Visited – 2005 Summer Only

SITE	PERCENT
Yosemite Falls	70 %
Bridalveil Fall	61
Visitor Center (Valley)	58
Half Dome	33
Mariposa Grove	31
Tuolumne Meadows	30
Wawona	26
Glacier Point	23
High Sierra	22
Happy Isles	22

Table 12. Top Ten Sites Visited – 2008 Winter Only

SITE	PERCENT
Yosemite Falls	59 %
Visitor Center (Valley)	55
Bridalveil Fall	43
Badger Pass	31
Mirror Lake	16
Indian Cultural Museum	15
Half Dome	11
Pioneer Yosemite History Center	8
Glacier Point Road	7
Vernal Fall	7

Table 13. Top Ten Sites Visited – 2009 Summer Only

SITE	PERCENT
Yosemite Valley	70 %
Yosemite Falls	59
Valley Visitor Center	56
Bridalveil Fall	56
Glacier Point	44
El Capitan Meadow	43
Tuolumne Meadows	38
Mariposa Grove	36
Wawona	33
Vernal Fall	28

Table 14. Sites Visited First – 2005 Summer Only

SITE	PERCENT
Bridalveil Fall	28 %
Valley Visitor Center	14
Yosemite Falls	9
Mariposa Grove	8
Wawona	7
Tuolumne Meadows	6

Table 15. Visitor Comments – 2005 Summer Only

COMMENT	NUMBER
Integrate more interpretive programs/activities	27
Offer more interpretive materials	18
Improve directional signage	16
Improve interpretive signage and information	15
More information on park activities	14
Offer information in other languages	6
Promote environmental education	6
Add rules and regulations signage	5
Offer children's programs/activities	3
Website improvements	3
Adequate and helpful signage	2
Interpretation information was valuable	2

Table 16. Visitor Comments – 2008 Winter Only

COMMENT	NUMBER
Promote education in park	5
Provide more information on weather	4
Give ranger-led programs	3
Provide more information on American Indian history	3
Post more signs	2
Show a movie about park	2
Update information on daily activities on website	2
Maps are terrible (park maps, trail maps)	2
Need more signs at ski and snowshoe trails	2

Table 17. Visitor Comments – 2009 Summer Only

COMMENT	NUMBER
Add ranger-led programs	5
Improve the park website	5
Provide more information and education about animals	4
Add ranger-led hikes	3
Add podcasts/iPod tours	2
Create suggested itineraries	2
Provide guided tours in Spanish	2
Educate about environmental impacts	2
Educate people on wilderness camping	2
Expand youth programs	2
Improve trail maps	2
Install maps at viewpoints	2
Provide information in other languages	2
Teach younger generation to protect the park	2
Disappointed in family scavenger hunt	2
Need better maps	2

Table 18. Volunteer Statistics, 2009-2010 and 2003

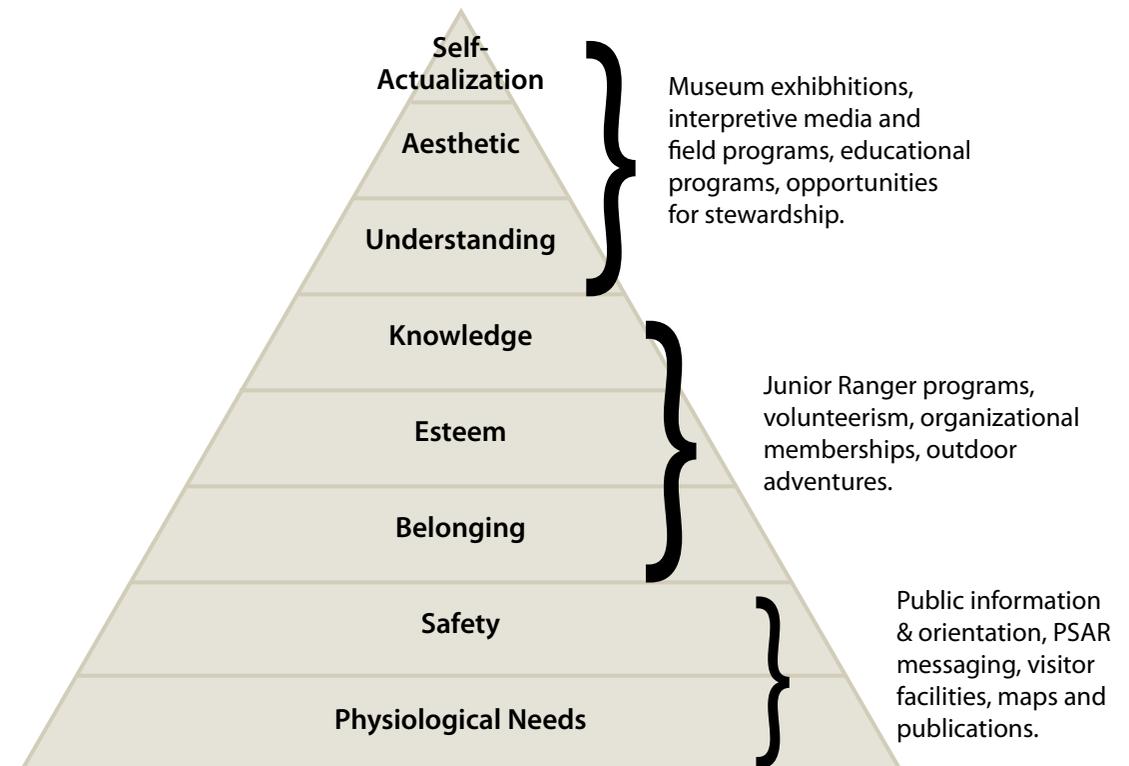
CATEGORY	2010	2009	2003
Number of volunteers (individual, group, and event)	8,493*	9,441	1,982
Hours donated	170,323	154,147	112,713
Number of groups	138	117	84
Drop-in or Event participants/hours (Facelift, HaPY, Etc.)	1,621/6,557	1,218/6,671	n/a
Volunteers who served more than 100 hours	362	272	206
NatureBridge Volunteers/hours	3,164/4,294	4,610/5,398	n/a
Yosemite Conservancy Volunteers/Hours	362/18,632	313/16,258	n/a
Hours by division			
Interpretation	27,381	26,610	22,560
Protection	34,924	15,576	30,218
Maintenance	28,161**	44,767	8,082
BRM	17,430	18,939	14,365
Resources	56,217	45,444	5,175
Admin/Planning/PM/VIP Office	2,101	1,115	2,087

* Change in reporting method reduced this number and made it more accurate

** Excluded Youth Conservation Corps and California Conservation Corps, which were previously included as donated services

Visitor Needs

In addition to local studies and visitor knowledge, there is a large body of science related to human behavior and needs. One of the human motivation theories most applicable to interpretation and education was developed by [Abraham Maslow](#) (1943) and is most commonly known as “Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.” Yosemite’s interpretive and educational partners strive to meet these human needs in a wide variety of ways.



Audience Experience Goals

Knowledge of audience characteristics and needs, combined with park management goals, create desired visitor experiences. Visitors come to parks seeking something of personal value and relevance for themselves. Visitor-experience goals are statements that describe those fundamental visitor-experience opportunities that Yosemite National Park, through its interpretive and educational programming, most wants to facilitate. Visitors cannot be required to have certain experiences, but the park has identified important experiences that should be made available.

The terms “audience” and “visitor” are both used here, as it is our goal to reach the broadest audience possible, including those who may never visit the park.

Park visitors will have the opportunity to:

- n Find enjoyment and inspiration.
- n Experience a sense of place unique to Yosemite.
- n Connect intellectually and emotionally with meanings related to park resources.
- n Participate in developing and telling park stories.
- n Connect directly with the outdoors in Yosemite.
- n Access Yosemite information easily in gateway communities, public media, alternative formats, multiple languages, and through varied forms of technology.
- n Conduct effective, comprehensive, and varied trip planning that addresses accessibility, safety, current conditions, and more.
- n Receive accurate, balanced, and consistent information and messages from all official park sources.
- n Interact with a park interpretive staff that is diverse in age, ethnicity, and gender, and includes both NPS rangers and park partners.
- n Understand that national parks are owned by the American public.
- n Experience the park in a safe manner.
- n Experience the essence of wilderness.
- n Understand and connect with park significance and interpretive themes.
- n Feel welcome in Yosemite, with a sense of trust and belonging.
- n Access park experiences that provide for a variety of levels and abilities.
- n Witness, learn about, and participate in park-based sustainability efforts, and understand how Yosemite operates as a leader in sustainable stewardship.
- n Actively participate in personal and organized stewardship actions (volunteer, financial, political, membership) before, during, and after their visit.
- n Experience the park in a sustainable manner.
- n Participate in inquiry- and discovery-based learning that is driven by their own interests.
- n Be exposed to recent scientific research findings and learn about the relevance of such studies to the park and to their own lives.
- n Experience authentic artifacts in a museum setting that is educational and enjoyable while ensuring preservation of these irreplaceable resources.
- n Understand and acknowledge the living population of American Indians and their continuing life ways and traditions in Yosemite.

In addition to the above, area residents, staff, tribes, and other public stakeholders will have opportunity to:

- n Interact regularly with park representatives—including managers, planners, interpreters, and educators—and participate in park planning and management decisions.
- n Connect and contribute to Yosemite’s protection.
- n Engage in the development of interpretive programs and products, particularly in the case of communities whose stories are being shared.

Employee and Visitor Safety

Along with protecting natural and cultural resources and serving park visitors, the National Park Service strives to provide its employees with a safe work environment. Yosemite’s Division of Interpretation and Education, along with park partners, can positively impact employee safety by demonstrating that healthy, productive employees are the park’s most important resource and that employee safety is the park’s most important value. Employees and managers must demonstrate an unwavering commitment to continuous improvement in employee health and safety by incorporating safety into all decision-making processes and into the overall planning cycle. Employees must eliminate all at-risk behaviors and control job hazards. Effective and appropriate safety/occupational health training should be conducted on a regular basis. Written safety rules and practices must be understood and followed by all employees. The majority of employee injuries at Yosemite National Park involve strains/sprains from slips and falls, back injuries from lifting, skin irritations from poison oak and insect bites, and “struck-by” injuries (falling items).

Many visitors are unprepared for safety issues that may occur while visiting Yosemite National Park. Most may not realize that riding in a motor vehicle is the most dangerous activity in the park. Park wildlife can be aggressive, if approached, and this may lead to injuries. Scenic rivers and waterfalls attract unprepared visitors to potentially dangerous situations. Bicycling is a popular form of recreation and transportation in the park; however, with very few bike paths or trails, it can be dangerous, especially for the inexperienced. Many visitors do not realize the dangers of bicycling on busy highways and often do not take the proper precautions, such as wearing suitable gear and following bicycle etiquette, laws, and safe-riding practices.

Visitors need basic information and understanding of outdoor-related safety concerns, such as personal heat issues (sunburn, heat exhaustion, heat stroke),

wildlife (bears, insects, mountain lions), weather conditions, and river/stream/lake conditions. The Division of Interpretation and Education and its partners can improve visitor safety by providing visitor-safety messages with every interpretive program. These safety messages will include the specific hazards associated with the interpretive event and general information about water hazards (specifically river crossings and waterfall dangers), wildlife, heat stress, and other hazards found in the park's environment. Visitor-safety awareness can also be increased by addressing hazards found in the natural environment through publications, brochures, and videos, as well as by hazard detection and abatement in visitor-use areas. A close working relationship with the park's safety officer provides current information as well as occasional funding partnerships for safety-related visitor education.

Interpretive Partner Roles and Responsibilities

Though the NPS has overall responsibility for managing Yosemite, such a dynamic and complex park cannot be fully supported by one agency or organization. While continuing to expand opportunities provided through long-established partners, ongoing partnerships with local non-profits like Yosemite Renaissance, emerging relationships with UC Merced and new non-profits such as the Yosemite Climbing Association, Balanced Rock Foundation, and others create exciting new potential for future collaboration.

Below are the roles of Yosemite's Division of Interpretation and Education and its long-established interpretive partners.

National Park Service (NPS)

The NPS Division of Interpretation and Education is responsible for overall coordination of parkwide interpretation and education programming. The NPS is responsible for implementing and evaluating this programming based on national standards for interpretation and education developed by the NPS through the Interpretive Development Program. The division consists of five branches as well as the Anniversary Program:

Education

The Education Branch is committed to curriculum-based education and to increasing the number of culturally diverse or under represented students served by park environmental education programs. The branch works with school districts and universities, as well as community, social and youth programs to ensure that students and youth participants of all backgrounds have the opportunity to visit and learn about stewardship, the legacy of public lands, and the natural and cultural history of Yosemite. The branch also seeks to increase environmental, scientific and cultural literacy, to bring a sense of awe and pride of ownership, and to encourage the next generation to consider park or public lands careers.

Field Operations

The Field Operations Branch, through personal interpretive services and collaboration with park partners and divisions, fosters park stewardship by facilitating opportunities for visitors to form their own intellectual and emotional connections to the meanings of park resources. The branch also enhances resource protection and visitor satisfaction, experience, and safety by providing personal orientation and information related to Yosemite and the surrounding area. Branch functions include, but are not limited to, guided walks and talks, tram tours, visitor information desks, multi-day backcountry trips, informal roving, and evening programs.

Interpretive Services

The Interpretive Services Branch, through non-personal services, fosters park stewardship, provides information to enhance visits, plans for programmatic universal accessibility within the park, and ensures a clear consistent visual message. The branch accomplishes this work through publications, exhibits, waysides, videos, podcasts, website content and design, and cooperative teamwork with Project Management, Planning, Resources Management and Science, and the other branches of the Division of Interpretation and Education.

Museum

The Museum Branch is comprised of museum collections, archival collections and the research library—all responsible for preserving the natural specimens, human cultural artifacts, and records that help document Yosemite's history. The Museum Branch provides for public enjoyment and understanding of these collections through exhibits and publications, their use in research, and their preservation and documentation using state-of-the-art techniques. The Yosemite Museum program collects, protects, preserves, provides access to, and uses objects, specimens, and archival and manuscript collections to aid understanding and to advance knowledge. Collections play important roles in resource management, research, and interpretive programs, and function as databases for park natural and cultural resources. The branch

also supports park programs and partners through cooperative activities that build on the museum's strengths.

Volunteer Program

The Volunteer Program engages the public in meaningful stewardship experiences at Yosemite and beyond. The program works with all park divisions and partners to identify areas of their operations where volunteers can provide labor to meet their program objectives. The Volunteer Program Office provides logistical and operational support to volunteers and their supervisors through training, policy development, and participation in volunteer program leadership on a local, regional and national level. Volunteers are engaged in stewardship opportunities as individuals and groups, and during special events. The program works closely with partners to facilitate volunteer opportunities.

Anniversary Program

The Deputy Chief of Interpretation and Education is also responsible for oversight of the Yosemite Anniversary Program which, led by a program coordinator, serves to collaborate with various park staff, park partners, concessions, organizations, and outlying communities to successfully honor the following anniversaries: 150th of the Yosemite Grant (2014), 50th of the Wilderness Act (2014), 125th of Yosemite National Park (2015), and 100th of the National Park Service (2016). The respective anniversaries will be honored through engaging commemorative events, interpretive and educational programs, and signature projects.

Park Concessioners (2012)

The Ansel Adams Gallery (TAAG)

Creating art is the expression of the “magical” elements of a natural scene. The Ansel Adams Gallery, through its interpretive programs, teaches people how to use tools of artistic media—be it camera, brush, or pen—to develop vision and creative expression. This process supports development of a love of the natural scene and a person's ability to convey that love to others.

Delaware North Company Parks & Resorts at Yosemite – Interpretive Services Department (DNC)

DNC Interpretive Services inspires park stewardship by creating a personal connection between the guest and the resource using direct and indirect techniques. This department embraces its role as educators, as a park partner, and as a role model for concessioner interpretation while upholding the mission of the NPS. All of DNC's guest recreation departments share this philosophy. DNC's targeted audiences include guests of their facilities, families with young children (under 6), special events and groups, and those seeking expanded fee-based experiences. DNC serves as the lead partner for special interpretive events such as Earth Day, and more.

Sierra Club (SC)—LeConte Memorial Lodge

Designed as the first permanent visitor center in Yosemite Valley, a reading room, and a gathering place—LeConte Memorial Lodge was established as a center for providing programs on natural science, preservation, history, and conservation. Today in keeping with the tradition of providing free public programming for visitors to Yosemite National Park, LeConte Memorial Lodge, during the summer months, provides educational programs, exhibits, and a library, all focusing on preservation, Yosemite, and the High Sierra.

Wildlink

WildLink's mission is to give under-served teens a series of wilderness- and home-based experiences that will empower them to better their own lives as well as the lives of their communities; and to ensure that the diverse California citizenry is informed, invested, and committed to the enduring resource of wilderness. WildLink is an innovative partnership between NatureBridge, Yosemite National Park, and national forests of the Sierra. Since 2000, the WildLink program has worked to open Sierra wilderness to the multi-cultural population living at its doorstep and to demonstrate the relevance and benefits of wilderness and public lands to all Americans.

Yosemite Conservancy

In 2010 Yosemite's two primary fund-raising/support organizations—the Yosemite Association and The Yosemite Fund—merged to become the Yosemite Conservancy. The Yosemite Association was a nonprofit membership organization formed in 1923 to provide opportunities for people to learn about, enjoy, and experience Yosemite National Park and the Sierra Nevada. The Yosemite Fund provided broad-based private funding and resources for projects that preserve, protect, or enhance Yosemite National Park, providing a “margin of excellence.”

The new organization combines the very best of these two entities and embraces a new mission and vision.

Mission: Providing for Yosemite's future is our passion. We inspire people to support projects and programs that preserve and protect Yosemite National Park's resources and enrich the visitor experience.

Vision: We will ensure that Yosemite remains an irreplaceable resource and wondrous icon by funding projects and programs that provide a margin of excellence and inspire enduring connections for current and future generations.

Yosemite Conservancy operations that most closely tie to the park's Interpretation and Education program include Projects, Retail, Publications, Education, Volunteers, and Programs. The Chief of Interpretation and Education is the senior park liaison to the Yosemite Conservancy; a non-voting member of the Project Enhancement Committee; and a regular attendee of Education and Programs Committee meetings, along with Retail and Publishing Committee meetings.

NatureBridge (formerly Yosemite Institute)

NatureBridge is dedicated to providing educational adventures in nature's classroom to inspire a personal connection to the natural world and responsible actions to sustain it. With a foundation in place-based experiential and inquiry-based learning, NatureBridge programs provide participants with personal knowledge of the natural world through the national parks and the skills to take an active role in stewardship in their home communities. NatureBridge is the

single largest provider of curriculum-based educational programming for grades 6-12 in Yosemite National Park and one of the largest and best-regarded outdoor education programs in the world.

Yosemite Renaissance (YR)

Yosemite Renaissance's goals are to bring together the works of serious contemporary artists that do not simply duplicate traditional representations; to establish a continuum with past generations of Yosemite artists; and to help re-establish visual art as a major interpretive medium of the landscape and a stimulus to the protection of the environment. YR will continue to organize an annual competitive, traveling exhibit of contemporary interpretations of Yosemite, as well as operating an artist-in-residence program for the park. The museum will host the annual exhibit, and may accept donations from resident artists for the park's permanent collection.

Others Who Provide Interpretive and Educational Programming in Yosemite

A growing number of local and national non-profit organizations are enhancing interpretation and visitor experience in Yosemite. While some of these organizations do not currently have agreements with the NPS, they provide a valuable niche service and are active members of the Interpretive Management Team. The Balanced Rock Foundation and the Yosemite Climbing Association are two such partners. National partners play a key role in Yosemite's volunteer programs and include The Student Conservation Association, American Hiking Society, Pacific Crest Trail Association, and more. Additionally, a host of private tour companies offer interpretive and educational experiences in Yosemite through Commercial Use Authorizations and Special Use Permits. The NPS will provide interpretive materials, guidance, and training to these providers as requested.

Yosemite's Interpretive Management Team

The entities above, along with representatives from NPS divisions of Business and Revenue Management, Resources Management and Science, and Visitor and Resource Protection (Wilderness) comprise the Interpretive Management Team (IMT). The team meets monthly to plan and implement Yosemite's diverse interpretive operations. New ideas for programs, publications, events, and more are brought to the group for discussion and approval. While this is a collaborative process, NPS serves as the lead agency and the Chief of Interpretation and Education has final approval authority related to IMT business. IMT will implement a schedule of business, beginning in 2009, to take greater advantage of this collaboration and increase efficiencies of the group.

- n IMT will meet on the third Tuesday of each month.
- n Meetings are open to all interested parties.
- n In addition to general business (GB), some months feature a special focus:

January (Special Events–Spring)

February (Summer Program Planning)

March (Seasonal Training Planning)

April (GB)

May (GB)

June (GB)

July (Publications Planning)

August (GB)

September (Half or Full Day Retreat—Annual Implementation Plan)

October (GB)

November (GB)

December (GB)

In summary, the foundations of Yosemite's Interpretation and Education Program are grounded in partnerships with a shared commitment to park purpose, significance, themes, goals, and understanding of audience. Taking the whole of these ideas into consideration, a vision and structure to move forward into the next era of interpretation at Yosemite National Park emerged. Those thoughts are captured in the recommendations section.

Appendix A:

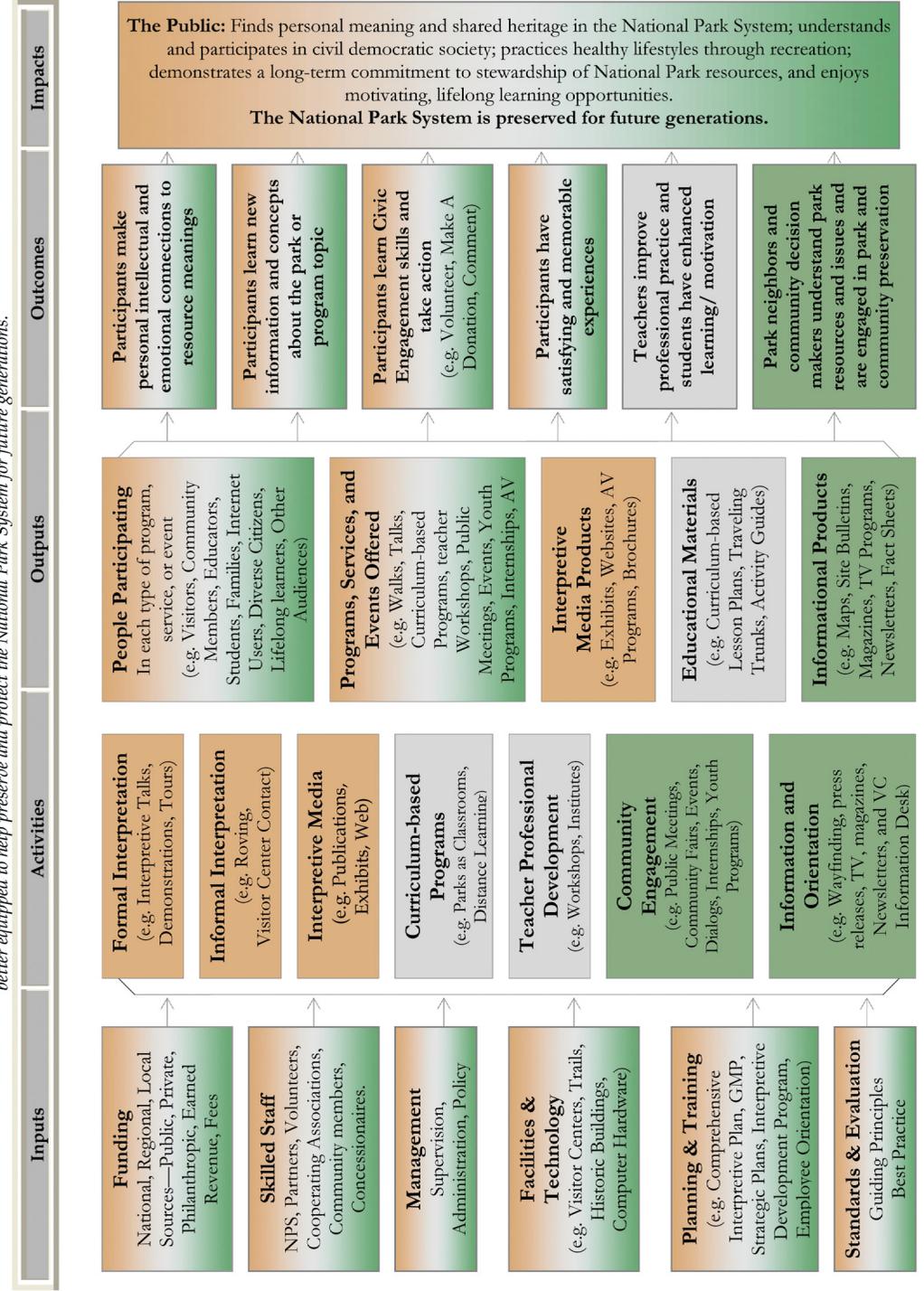
Core Planning Team and Consultants

Julia Washburn	Facilitator/Consultant
Tom Medema	Chief of Interpretation and Education
Jonathan Bayless	Branch Chief, Museum
Shauna Potocky	Branch Chief, Education
Mary Kline	Branch Chief, Interpretive Services
Victoria Mates	Deputy Chief, Field Operations (former)
Heather Boothe	Branch Chief, Volunteer Program
Andy Fristensky	Valley Interpretive Operations Supervisor
Bob Roney	Master Interpreter
Adrienne Freeman	Writer/Editor
Kassandra Hardy	Anniversary Coordinator
Donna Sisson	Public Outreach & Engagement
Carol Knipper	Resources Management and Science
Kristina Rylands	NatureBridge (formerly NPS Planning)
Jeannette Simons	Indian Cultural Liaison/Compliance (former)
Claudia Welsh	The Ansel Adams Gallery (former)
Emily Jacobs	DNC Parks & Resorts at Yosemite, Inc.
David Guy	Yosemite Conservancy (former)
Pete Devine	Yosemite Conservancy
Michael Bilodeau	NatureBridge

Appendix B: NPS Interpretation and Education Program Logic Model

(Note: The expanded Logic Model is in the DVD Database.)

National Park Service Interpretation and Education Program Logic Model
Premise: If the NPS offers high quality interpretive, curriculum-based, and informational programs to a diverse public, the public will have better quality of life and will be better equipped to help preserve and protect the National Park System for future generations.



**Long-Range
Interpretive Plan
for
Yosemite National Park**

**PART TWO:
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOSEMITE'S
INTERPRETIVE AND EDUCATIONAL
PROGRAMMING**

**YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK
FEBRUARY 2012**

Table of Contents

Comprehensive Interpretive Planning	17
Introduction to the Long-Range Interpretive Plan	19
Part One: Foundation for Planning	23
Park Purpose	24
Resource Significance	25
Interpretive Themes	28
Management Goals for Interpretation and Education	48
Visitation and Audience Characteristics	57
Audience Experience Goals	72
Employee and Visitor Safety	75
Interpretive Partner Roles and Responsibilities	77
Yosemite's Interpretive Management Team	83
Appendix A: Core Planning Team and Consultants	79
Appendix B: NPS Interpretation and Education Logic Model	81
Part Two: Recommendations for Yosemite's Interpretive and Educational Programming	
Yosemite Inspires the World	5
Issues Affecting Interpretation	7
Pattern of Recommendations	14
1. Reaching People in their Home Communities	15
2. Reaching People in Gateway Communities	21
3. Reaching People at Park Entrances and Boundaries	28
4. Reaching People at Yosemite's Key Destinations	31
5. General Operational Recommendations	47
Part Three: Annual Implementation Plan	
DVD: Foundation, Recommendations, and Interpretive Database	

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Tom Medema
Chief, Interpretation & Education

Funding for this project has been provided by
the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, an agency of the State of California.



Ranger Carla Saldana, a former UC Merced Intern, uses a sequoia cone to connect visitors to the big trees story.

Yosemite Inspires the World

Park Vision

Working across boundaries and generations, Yosemite and its employees inspire global commitment to conservation and stewardship.

Interpretation and Education Vision

A bold leader, grounded in partnerships, Interpretation and Education in Yosemite engages all people in connecting with the meanings and values of national parks, inspiring conservation and stewardship on an unprecedented and global scale.

Crafted with committed partners, the recommendations which follow seek to achieve Yosemite's collective vision for the future. Each recommendation is designed to meet the mission and vision by addressing and implementing park purpose, themes, goals, and issues outlined throughout this plan. These recommendations are also founded on the premise of the NPS Interpretation and Education Program Logic Model (Part I. Appendix B):

If the NPS offers high quality Interpretive, Curriculum-based, and informational programs to a diverse public, the public will have better quality of life and will be better equipped to help preserve and protect the National Park System for future generations.



Ranger Karen Kanes interprets Yosemite wildlife during National Junior Ranger Day.



Yosemite Interpretation and Education Division, August 2008.

Issues Affecting Interpretation

Since no interpretive program operates in a vacuum, this section provides context for understanding, planning, and implementing the park's interpretation and education program. Issues often include topics such as servicewide initiatives, critical resource issues, issues related to staffing and funding, employee development, use of technologies, dynamics of neighboring communities, and concerns of stakeholders not voiced previously.

Sustainable Funding

Both individually and collectively, NPS and partner organizations need creative and focused strategies to maintain or increase funding for interpretive services in Yosemite. Funding is needed both on a project-by-project basis and for core interpretive services and staff, which need to be provided for on a longer-term basis.

The 2010 NPS Budget Scorecard Measure Value Report shows that Yosemite spends \$0.44 per visitor for interpretive services, while the Pacific West Region (PWR) average is \$5.59 and the national average is \$5.80. The report also shows that Yosemite Interpretation and Education base funding as a percentage of total park base expenditures is 5.79%, while the PWR average is 19.18% and the servicewide average is 21.33%. As a result, interpretive contacts per visitor in Yosemite measure 0.70 (compared to 1.02 for PWR and 1.19 servicewide), and visitor satisfaction rates at 89%, lower than the PWR (93.07%) and servicewide (94.65%) averages. However, Yosemite rates exceedingly well in visitor understanding (100%) compared to PWR (86.24%), and servicewide (87.51%), suggesting great potential given comparable funding to other PWR and NPS park units.

The Division of Interpretation and Education must continue to be entrepreneurial in seeking sustainable funding for key programs and priorities through fundraising partnerships and effective proposals for Recreation Fee, OFS, and Concession Franchise Fee funding sources.

Anniversaries

As stated in the park purpose, resource significance statements, and interpretive themes:

Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove were the first globally recognized scenic natural areas to be set aside by any government for public benefit and appreciation of landscape beauty, making Yosemite the birthplace of the national park idea, which has spread throughout the world.

[2014 marks the 150th Anniversary of the Yosemite Grant](#), the Act of Congress that sparked the national park idea. The combination of this event and the NPS Centennial in 2016 create exciting opportunities to share the story of Yosemite's role in the development of national parks worldwide.

2014 also marks the [50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act](#). Nowhere else in the continental United States is there a straight line of 150 miles that is roadless—from Bald Mountain north to Yosemite's Tioga Pass, no road crosses this part of Sierra. Today, nearly 95% of Yosemite National Park is designated Wilderness. Yosemite's 125th Anniversary as a national park occurs in 2015.

In 2016, the [NPS will celebrate its 100th anniversary](#). In 2011, the NPS Director Jon Jarvis issued A Call to Action: Preparing for the Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement, focusing on relevancy, education, stewardship and professional excellence. The action items called for in this document will support and drive the work of Yosemite Interpretation and Education in the run-up to the NPS Centennial and beyond.

[Wild and Scenic River Plans](#)

The Tuolumne and Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management plans will set the direction for interpretation, resource management, development, user capacity, visitor experience and much more in these two key river corridors. Participation in these efforts is crucial to successful planning, and ensuring opportunities for visitor connections to park resources is of paramount importance. The NPS Division of Interpretation and Education will have a minimum of one representative on the core team for each plan.

[Yosemite Conservancy](#)

The merger of the Yosemite Association (YA) and The Yosemite Fund (YF) to form the Yosemite Conservancy creates new opportunities for partnership in interpretive and educational programming. Traditionally YA provided operational support to fund interpretive rangers, Parsons Lodge, Experience Your Yosemite, publications, the Art and Education Center, volunteers, and more. The Yosemite Fund provided support for individual projects such as exhibits, publications, podcasts, waysides, museum collections, Junior Ranger programming, and much more. It is imperative that the park work with the new organization to continue funding support in each of these critical areas and explore new areas of operational and program support as federal budget projections look increasingly challenging.

Housing and Transportation

Adequate housing and transportation is a continual challenge for park management and staff. The NPS and its interpretive partners must seek and promote creative and alternative housing and transportation solutions.

Staffing

While NPS seasonal staffing has increased recently due to Centennial Initiative funding, the number of permanent full-time positions has eroded, and subject-to-furlough positions are only base-funded for the minimum six months. An Operations Formulation System (OFS) or other base increase is critical to cover core services and staff. Keeping in mind the challenges with housing and long-term funding, recruiting and retaining personnel becomes problematic. Additionally, long commutes and increasing fuel prices put further stress on staff.

Expanded Partnerships

While Yosemite is a leader in interpretive partnerships, more opportunities exist, particularly in gateway communities. Promoting and formalizing partnerships with other federal agencies; tribal, state, and local governments; universities; and organizations will further strengthen the park's ability to connect people to resources and foster stewardship in the region.

[Indian Cultural Center at Wahhoga](#)

The development of a new Indian Cultural Center in Yosemite Valley by associated tribes will help visitors explore and connect to Yosemite's first people. It will also enable the continuation of their traditional cultural knowledge and life ways.

Collaboration between the tribes, the Indian Cultural Program, and Interpretive Services Branch is necessary to create a strong, new interpretive partnership.

A representative from Interpretation and Education will serve on the Wahhoga core team.

Concession Contract

A new concession contract for the park's primary concessioner will be issued within the first few years of this plan's implementation. Input by the Division of Interpretation and Education is needed before that time to ensure interpretive and educational concerns and opportunities are identified in the prospectus and subsequent contract. The division will also need to work closely with the successful bidder to ensure continuity in interpretive programming and operations.

Global Climate Change

Scientific evidence is clear that human-caused climate change is a reality and has the potential to profoundly affect Earth's ecosystems. These changes will continue to affect the natural and cultural resources in the Yosemite region. The NPS has recently established a Global Climate Change Office in the Natural Resource Program Center of the Division of Natural Resources Stewardship & Science. Some new programs have already been established including the Climate Friendly Parks program and Do Your Part! for Climate Friendly Parks program. The NPS has also formed a servicewide climate change steering committee with a sub-group focused on communication of climate change issues. Yosemite's Interpretation and Education program and partners will continue to address global climate change as it relates to local, national, and global environmental resource protection.

[Park Planning, Project Management, and Litigation](#)

Yosemite is a complex place to manage. Aside from the varied natural and cultural resources and visitor use, the public is passionate about protection and access to the park; many people care deeply about Yosemite. At times, these passions represent value systems that directly conflict with the way in which the park is being managed, management that is often mandated by laws open to varied interpretation. This combination of factors can, and does, lead to controversy and even litigation. Park interpreters serve as key communicators to the public and park staff about park planning efforts. The park must ensure that interpretation and education are key elements of all park plans and ensure that project information is thorough, balanced, and readily understood. Interpreters must interpret litigation in a balanced way, while not shying away from conveying the park's position on issues. Finally, interpreters must strive to involve the public in park plans and management decisions so that the decisions produced are comprehensive and have a higher level of acceptance and understanding among the public.

Natural Processes and Emergencies

Yosemite is no stranger to major natural events such as [flooding](#), [rockfall](#), [fire](#), and more. These events create tremendous opportunities for learning and understanding. Park interpreters and educators also play a key role in visitor safety, emergency information, and incident management. NPS and its partners must continue to foster interdivisional incident cooperation, allowing interpretive staff to train and participate in incident activities such as Search & Rescue, Fire Management, and others.

[Social Science Research](#)

Interpretive and educational effectiveness is very difficult to measure, and audience information is critical to the success of interpretive efforts. Interpreters must encourage, support, and participate in social science research related to interpretation and educational outcomes. Additionally, interpreters must stay informed of research findings and use this information to enhance interpretive programs and projects.

University Partnerships

The now-established partnership with the new University of California, Merced campus provides exciting opportunities for Yosemite National Park. As part of a world-class university system with a growing and diverse student population, UC Merced has created synergy that has already resulted in new programs for research, learning, teaching, stakeholder involvement, and interpretation. The Sierra Nevada Research Institute in Wawona, the Wilderness Center on the UC Merced campus, and other major ongoing partnership efforts make this one of the most dynamic, progressive, and promising educational partnerships of the new century. Opportunities for new partnerships with local universities such as California State University, Fresno (Fresno State) should be explored and pursued.

Environmental Education Center

The NPS and NatureBridge have begun development of a new environmental education center at Henness Ridge to replace the one currently located at Crane Flat. This new facility will enhance NPS and NatureBridge's ability to provide world-class educational opportunities for youth. Increased NPS presence at, and use of, a new center is a priority for both organizations.

New Museum Facility and Activities

The Museum Program has been evaluating the critical need for upgraded facilities to meet preservation standards and address users' needs, now and into the future. Program evaluations and a Value Analysis of proposed construction of a new facility in the NPS El Portal complex have been completed. The Indian Cultural Exhibit and adjacent Museum Gallery are critical elements of the park's interpretive program, and relocation of the Yosemite Museum collection facility will have impacts on these closely tied operations. In addition, new collection acquisitions, publications, research and partnerships provide opportunities for innovative exhibits, special activities and celebrations. The Museum Branch must continue to work closely with the division and outside partners to encourage public access to, and appreciation and understanding of, the park's museum collection.

Programmatic Accessibility

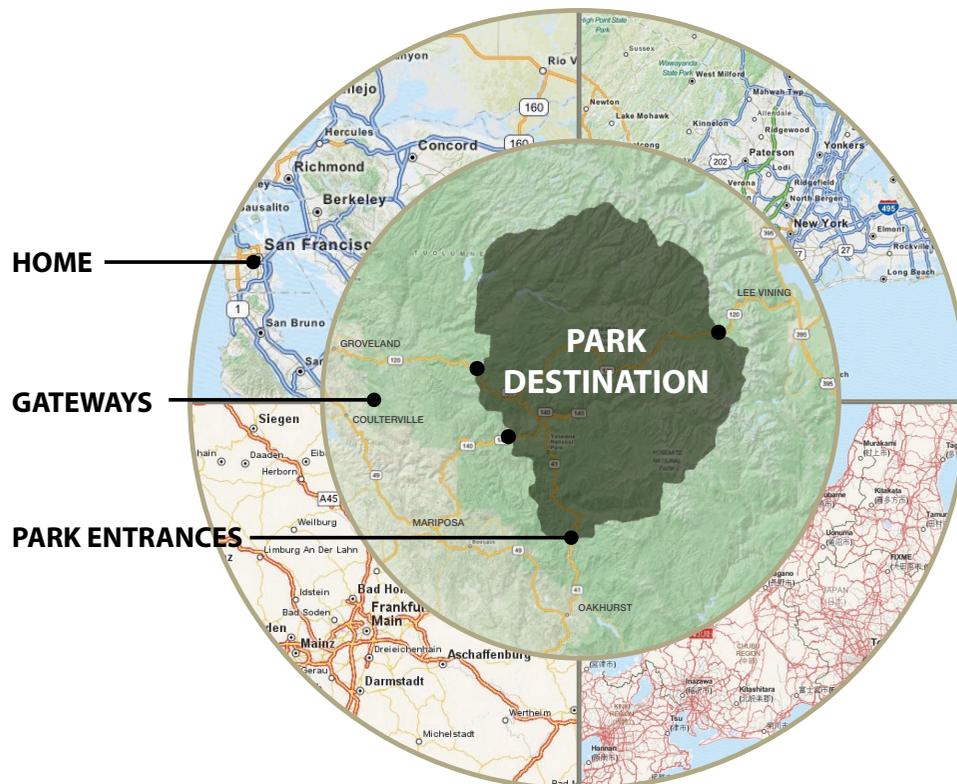
Universal access to interpretive services must be a priority for all entities providing these services to the public. Programs, publications, audio-visual systems, web pages, and more must be evaluated internally before being put online to ensure universal access has been addressed. While it is acknowledged that not every service will be directly available to every person, everyone should have access to park stories in some way.

Regional Initiatives

In the past, national parks were governed largely as islands, considering issues only within their boundaries. Yosemite now functions as a partner in a greater region, the Sierra Nevada Network, with the understanding that external issues impact the ability to manage the park as much as management decisions impact the communities around the park. Interpretation plays an important role in facilitating dialogue between network parks, other government agencies, gateway communities, and the park—which ultimately builds the park's capacity to better accomplish the NPS mission.

Pattern of Recommendations

[Interpretive and educational services](#) offered by Yosemite National Park fit a pattern of concentric circles. The outer limit is how we reach people in their **homes and local communities**. The next ring represents reaching people in Yosemite's **gateway communities** as they travel toward the park. Next, interpretive and educational efforts are focused at Yosemite's **entrances and boundaries**. Finally, the center ring of services and stewardship opportunities occurs at Yosemite National Park's key **visitor destinations**. The following recommendations for interpretive and educational products and services are based on this model.



1. Reaching People in Their Home Communities

A Yosemite experience most often begins in one's home community. Recent studies, cited in the Foundations section, show that park websites, maps/brochures, and friends/relatives/word-of-mouth are three of the most desired methods of obtaining park information about future visits. In addition to providing trip-planning information, the park should provide opportunities for connection to resources through educational programming in schools, interpretive podcasts, publications, community exhibitions, virtual volunteering, and more.

Key Audience Experience Goals addressed here include:

- n Connect intellectually and emotionally with meanings related to park resources.
- n Conduct effective, comprehensive, and varied trip planning that addresses accessibility, safety, current conditions, stewardship opportunities, and more.
- n Receive accurate, balanced, and consistent information and messages from all official park sources.
- n Be exposed to recent scientific research findings and learn about the relevance of such studies to the park and to their own lives.
- n Access Yosemite information easily in public media, alternative formats, multiple languages, and through appropriate technology.
- n Access information about volunteering opportunities, both at Yosemite and in support of Yosemite at their homes.

1.1 Educational Programming

1.1.1. Teacher–Ranger–Teacher Program

- 1.1.1.1. Develop agreements with multiple under-served school districts throughout California and utilize experienced teachers as seasonal park rangers.

1.1.2. Web

- 1.1.2.1. Engage students in ongoing research as it is conducted in the park.
- 1.1.2.2. Develop relevant programming that can be delivered in student communities, while bridging access to Yosemite.
- 1.1.2.3. Utilize emerging technologies to broadcast into classrooms across the country and around the world.

1.2. Interpretive Services

1.2.1. Publications

- 1.2.1.1. Secure sustainable funding for the park’s two primary publications, Yosemite Map & [Guide](#) (unigrid) and Yosemite Guide. Look for funding partners in gateway communities and work with NPS Washington Support Office (WASO) to make fee regulations more flexible. *ACCOMPLISHED 2010*
- 1.2.1.2. Continue development of the publications noted above as well as fact sheets on primary resources of public and management interest.
- 1.2.1.3. Make all park publications available online.
- 1.2.1.4. Continue to seek outside funding for Yosemite Conservancy publications program.
- 1.2.1.5. In cooperation with the park’s anniversary coordinator, create and disseminate unique and commemorative anniversary publications that engage people in Yosemite’s anniversaries in meaningful ways that also promotes anniversary activities.

- 1.2.1.6. Highlight anniversaries in appropriate park publications, including *Yosemite Guide*.

1.2.2. Web/Audio Visual

- 1.2.2.1. Work with Resources Management and Science (RMS) Visitor Use and Social Science Branch to design and execute a web-user survey.
- 1.2.2.2. Expand podcast offerings beyond those that are currently available to include trip planning, wayfinding, orientation, information, volunteer profiles, and more interpretation. Expand podcasts to include Spanish and other languages.
- 1.2.2.3. Continue to expand Resources Management and Science pages, creating additional content as prioritized by the RMS Chief.
- 1.2.2.4. Support partners in development of web content related to interpretation and education, and strive towards “one-stop-shopping” for trip planning.
- 1.2.2.5. Continue expansion of Yosemite Conservancy website with expanded content, including a web store, webcams, a natural history blog, volunteer information, and more Nature Notes entries.
- 1.2.2.6. Develop and make available more interpretive and informational products in digital formats.
- 1.2.2.7. Expand web contacts through newer avenues such as social networking sites, blogs, and more.
- 1.2.2.8. Identify information gaps in mobile application products and work with Yosemite Conservancy in development of new Apps to enhance visitor experience.
- 1.2.2.9. In cooperation with the park’s anniversary coordinator, for anniversary planning and promotion:
- 1.2.2.10. Utilize web technologies to allow people to participate in commemorative planning sessions and activities.

- 1.2.2.11. Integrate facts pertaining to the rich history of preserving this landscape into 'Did You Know' facts on the park's website.
- 1.2.2.12. Enhance existing history pages throughout the park's website including special features on anniversary exhibits and an online version of the archive repository.
- 1.2.2.13. Participate in use of social media sites, providing engaging and inspiring facts regarding the upcoming anniversaries.
- 1.2.2.14. Maintain the anniversary blog on a regular basis.
- 1.2.2.15. Develop a podcast series on the significance of the upcoming anniversaries.
- 1.2.2.16. Work with videographers to develop a Nature Notes series to highlight Yosemite's anniversaries.

1.3. Museum Program

1.3.1. Publications

- 1.3.1.1. Develop and publish access guides for collections and archives.
- 1.3.1.2. Work with Heyday Press or others to publish or reprint books, and make photographs of museum objects available as postcards, in calendars, or other print media. Continue to provide illustrations for print, film, and other media from museum, archives, and library collections.
- 1.3.1.3. Publish Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for providing illustrations for print, film, and other media from museum, archives, and library collections.

1.3.2. Web

- 1.3.2.1. Create greater access to collections through online content including podcasts, exhibits, digital image collections, and instructions for personal access to Yosemite's vast collection.

- 1.3.2.2. Submit data on representative collection items and photographs to WASO Museum Management Program web catalog.
- 1.3.2.3. Develop content for submission to the Online Archive of California.

1.4. Personal Services & Public Information Office (PIO)

1.4.1. Customer Service

- 1.4.1.1. Support the addition of a wilderness information phone line, managed by Visitor and Resource Protection Division (Wilderness) to alleviate pressure on PIO and provide better customer service.
- 1.4.1.2. Aggressively promote the enhancement of the park information line (209/372-0200) and create content in Spanish and other languages.

1.4.2. Staffing

- 1.4.2.1. Continue to support sustainable funding and staffing of Public Information Office as the primary clearing-house for non-web-based trip planning and general park information.

1.4.3. Special Events

- 1.4.3.1. Continue to provide staffing in support of regional cultural events, partner events, and other special requests.

1.5. Volunteer Program

1.5.1. Recruitment and Community-building

- 1.5.1.1. Create one-stop web-portal for learning about volunteer opportunities at the park as part of trip planning.
- 1.5.1.2. Continue to digitize and streamline the job announcement and application process for both group and individual volunteer opportunities.

- 1.5.1.3. Develop a volunteer community portal to highlight past and future volunteer activities and serve to keep past volunteers connected to the park.
- 1.5.1.4. Reach out to regional organizations (such as Boy Scouts and schools) to develop new volunteer partnerships.
- 1.5.1.5. Develop “virtual volunteer” opportunities for the public to serve Yosemite in their own homes.

2. Reaching People in Gateway Communities

Many local communities, large and small, serve as gateways to a Yosemite experience. Providing transportation, accommodation, information, food, and other services, these gateways are critical to the visitor experience. Myriad opportunities exist for partnership with these communities to enhance that visitor experience.

Audience Experience Goals addressed here include:

- n Connect intellectually and emotionally with meanings related to park resources.
- n Access Yosemite information easily in gateway communities, public media, alternative formats, multiple languages, and through appropriate technology.
- n Conduct effective, comprehensive, and varied trip planning that addresses accessibility, safety, current conditions, and more.
- n Receive accurate, balanced, and consistent information and messages from all official park sources.
- n Understand and connect with park significance and interpretive themes.
- n Actively participate in personal and organized stewardship actions (volunteer, financial, political, membership) before, during, and after their visit.
- n Interact regularly with park representatives—including managers, planners, interpreters, and educators—and participate in park planning and management decisions.
- n Connect and contribute to Yosemite’s protection.
- n Experience meaningful volunteer opportunities developed for gateway community residents.
- n Engage in the development of interpretive programs and products, particularly in the case of communities whose stories are being shared.

2.1. Educational Programming

2.1.1. New Education Initiatives

- 2.1.1.1. Adopt the “Class of 2016” in gateway communities to develop annual connections to Yosemite and the NPS through the NPS Centennial.
- 2.1.1.2. Pilot “Gateway Expressions” art competition with local youth in partnership with Ansel Adams Gallery and Yosemite Conservancy.
- 2.1.1.3. Incorporate Parks In Focus, a partnership with the Udall Foundation that connects youth to public lands through photography.

2.1.2. Internships and Service Learning

- 2.1.2.1. Recruit local high school students for internships within the park and with associated community projects or programs.
- 2.1.2.2. Develop service learning opportunities for gateway students.
- 2.1.2.3. Increase internship opportunities for youth through regional and national recruitments.

2.1.3. Staffing

- 2.1.3.1. Identify sustainable funding for growth of education staff in support of programming in gateway communities and the Central Valley. Redirect Centennial Initiative funding to hire two term GS-7 education technicians.

2.1.4. Fresno Discovery Center

- 2.1.4.1. Continue work with The Discovery Center in Fresno to enhance environmental education related to Yosemite’s resources.

2.1.5. Partnerships

- 2.1.5.1. Continue to build strong partnerships with organizations in order to reach underserved or culturally diverse youth and provide these youth with high quality programming and experiences within Yosemite.

2.2. Interpretive Services

2.2.1. Publications

- 2.2.1.1. Distribute Yosemite Guide through local chambers and visitor bureaus to get information to visitors before arrival.
- 2.2.1.2. Continue sustainable funding for Yosemite Guide through the Recreation Fee program (printing) as well as Primary Park Partner funding (design/editing).
- 2.2.1.3. Increase Yosemite Conservancy publication and membership materials available in gateway visitor centers and retail outlets.

2.2.2. Visitor Centers

- 2.2.2.1. Promote development of comprehensive interagency visitor centers in Oakhurst, Mariposa, and Groveland to include staffing, volunteers, exhibits, audio-visual programs, and Yosemite Conservancy retail operations. Identify partner agencies and organizations that could contribute to and benefit from operation of such facilities.
- 2.2.2.2. Work with the Yosemite Conservancy to develop capital campaign strategies related to the development of these interagency facilities.
- 2.2.2.3. Continue partnership with U.S. Forest Service at the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center. Continue growth of fee collection operations to direct bus traffic and visitor traffic to this location.
- 2.2.2.4. Develop new visitor information opportunities in Lee Vining Canyon through collaboration with Inyo National Forest.
- 2.2.2.5. Provide assistance to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at Briceburg Visitor Center, providing technical expertise in development of exhibits.

2.2.3. New Media

- 2.2.3.1. Collaborate with the Eastern Sierra Institute for Collaborative Education in development of the Roadside Heritage Scenic Science project.

2.3. Museum Program**2.3.1. The Arts**

- 2.3.1.1. Continue work with [Yosemite Renaissance](#) and Mariposa County to promote and encourage the arts of Yosemite through their competition, exhibit, and artist-in-residence programs.

2.3.2. Community Partnerships

- 2.3.2.1. Continue to work with outlying museums and historical societies such as the Mariposa County Historical Society, Northern Mariposa County History Center, Fresno Flats Historical Society, and others to provide professional support, networking, and other assistance in developing their museum and archival programs.

2.3.3. Customer Service

- 2.3.3.1. Continue to respond to public inquiries by phone, mail, email, and in person at the research library, archives, and museum.
- 2.3.3.2. Continue to provide scans of material from museum, library, and archive collections for publications, exhibits, web content, and personal use.
- 2.3.3.3. Display museum-related publications in appropriate community locations.

2.3.4. Facilities

- 2.3.4.1. Investigate potential museum and archival work and storage space in a gateway community, in addition to possible park locations.

2.4. Personal Services**2.4.1. Public Information Office**

- 2.4.1.1. Continue strong ties with gateway visitor bureaus and chambers to ensure timely, accurate, and consistent flow of information.

2.4.2. [Gateway Visitor Centers](#)

- 2.4.2.1. Secure funding to support staffing, by NPS, partners, and volunteers, at all gateway interagency visitor centers. Promote and support expansion of facilities as appropriate.

2.4.3. [Briceburg](#)

- 2.4.3.1. Assist BLM with staffing the renovated visitor center at Briceburg.

2.4.4. Groveland

- 2.4.4.1. Seek funding opportunities to place ranger staff at information centers in town.

2.4.5. Mariposa

- 2.4.5.1. Continue partnership with Interagency Visitor Center by placing seasonal rangers and volunteers at this location. Support and promote development of expanded visitor facilities at this location.

2.4.6. Mono Basin

- 2.4.6.1. Explore Service First authority or other suitable agreements to further the goals of the partnership at the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center in Lee Vining.

2.4.7. Oakhurst

- 2.4.7.1. Continue partnership with Visitor Bureau by placing seasonal rangers and volunteers at this location.

2.4.8. Anniversary Program

- 2.4.8.1. Disseminate unique and commemorative anniversary publications to chambers, visitor bureaus, and visitor centers.

- 2.4.8.2. Present Anniversary Program to interested community groups through interpretive and informational programs.
- 2.4.8.3. Attend community chambers, visitor bureaus, and other relevant tourist organizations meetings to disseminate anniversary information.
- 2.4.8.4. Work with community chambers, visitor bureaus, and other relevant tourist organizations to promote the anniversaries through printed advertisement, editorials, and collateral materials.
- 2.4.8.5. Recruit community members through the Yosemite Gateway Partners organization to actively participate in the anniversary program.
- 2.4.8.6. Engage communities in presenting our shared heritage at this significant time in history by hosting anniversary commemorative events and educational or interpretive programs.
- 2.4.8.7. Engage community vendors in producing sustainable, local commemorative products honoring the anniversaries.
- 2.4.8.8. Seek opportunities to integrate special anniversary exhibits into existing galleries and museums.
- 2.4.8.9. Explore opportunities to advance the vision of the NPS with potential anniversary legacy enhancement projects in communities.

2.5. Volunteer Program

- 2.5.1. Develop volunteer programs to support visitor information facilities in gateway communities.
- 2.5.2. Develop meaningful volunteer opportunities for local residents, including a recruiting and retention strategy.

- 2.5.3. Improve marketing of volunteer program as part of outreach to gateway communities.
- 2.5.4. Involve local communities in national volunteer events (Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, National Volunteer Day, etc.)
- 2.5.5. Reach out to under-served populations (such as disabled youth and veterans) from commuting-distance communities to participate in volunteer programming.

3. Reaching People at Park Entrances and Boundaries

(South Entrance, Arch Rock, Big Oak Flat, Tioga Pass, Hetch Hetchy, Chowchilla Mountain Road, Cherry Lake, and boundary trails)

- n Audience Experience Goals addressed here include:
- n Experience a sense of place unique to Yosemite.
- n Access Yosemite information easily in gateway communities, public media, alternative formats, multiple languages, and through appropriate technology.
- n Conduct effective, comprehensive, and varied trip planning that addresses accessibility, safety, current conditions, and more.
- n Receive accurate, balanced, and consistent information and messages from all official park sources.
- n Interact with a park interpretive staff that is diverse in age, ethnicity, and gender, and includes NPS rangers, volunteers, and park partners.
- n Experience the park in a safe manner.
- n Feel welcome in Yosemite, with a sense of trust and belonging.
- n Access park experiences that provide for a variety of levels and abilities.
- n Experience the park in a sustainable manner.

3.1. Fee Collection

- 3.1.1. Formalize communication with entrance station supervisors to ensure timely, accurate, and consistent flow of information. Develop closer relationships between interpretive district supervisors and entrance station supervisors.
- 3.1.2. Ensure cross-training of staff during seasonal training.
- 3.1.3. Ensure that entrance station staff are aware of fee waivers related to Interpretation and Education programming and how to help participants reach those programs.

3.2. Interpretive Services

3.2.1. Big Oak Flat (BOF)

- 3.2.1.1. Renovate information station lobby and deck to meet accessibility standards and create better visitor interface for interpretation, wilderness, and Yosemite Conservancy staff. **ACCOMPLISHED 2011**
- 3.2.1.2. Promote complete rehabilitation of BOF entrance station, offices, and visitor center to include a Yosemite Conservancy sales outlet, wilderness permit operations, NPS information/interpretive facilities, and DNC tour desk.

3.2.2. Customer Service

- 3.2.2.1. Collaborate with park partners on information dissemination related to visitor experience.

3.2.3. Interpretive Technology

- 3.2.3.1. Consider development of appropriate and emerging technology to distribute to visitors at entrances for use-in-vehicle CD players, cell phones, smart-phones, GPS units, video players, and more.
- 3.2.3.2. Work with Visitor and Resource Protection Division in development of a new ITS radio broadcast from park entrances.

3.2.4. Planning

- 3.2.4.1. Develop a comprehensive plan for information/orientation dissemination at all park entrances. Conduct a needs assessment for amount and type of information at each entrance.
- 3.2.4.2. Develop Project Management Information System (PMIS) and Yosemite Conservancy proposals for development of new kiosks, bulletin boards, or waysides at park entrances.

3.3. Personal Services

3.3.1. Personal services at park entrances will be sufficient to enhance the visitor experience in getting to their destinations.

- 3.3.1.1. Personal services at park entrances will be sufficient to enhance the visitor experience in getting to their destinations.
- 3.3.1.2. Work with entrance station supervisors to identify possible times and places for utilizing interpreters and volunteers to assist with traffic lines. The purpose would be to disseminate information/orientation and enhance visitor experience while visitors are waiting to enter the park.
- 3.3.1.3. Work with entrance station supervisors to conduct a needs assessment for personal informational services at entrance parking lots.

4. Reaching People at Yosemite's Key Destinations

(Yosemite Valley, Mariposa Grove, Wawona, Glacier Point, Tuolumne, Mather District/Hetch Hetchy, and Tioga Road)

The full spectrum of Audience Experience Goals are addressed here.

The recommendations on the pages that follow are organized by operational discipline and geography. To begin, however, we will briefly describe the overall desired interpretive conditions at each key destination.

4.1.1. [Glacier Point](#)

Interpretation at Glacier Point, one of the most spectacular vistas in the world, focuses on scenery and geology, but touches many other themes as well. A balance of formal programs, informal roving, and interpretive waysides will be maintained at this seasonal destination.

4.1.2. [Mariposa Grove](#)

One of the inspirations for the national park idea, the Grove focuses on interpretation of giant sequoias, fire, the birth of the NPS, and other themes. Guided walks, informal roving, tram tours, wayside exhibits, and a visitor center will be maintained to meet visitor and park needs at this location.

4.1.3. [Mather District/Hetch Hetchy](#)

Hetch Hetchy Valley, Big Oak Flat Entrance, Crane Flat, Merced and Tuolumne Groves of Giant Sequoias, and White Wolf make up this diverse and far-flung district. A wide range of visitor services will be provided here, addressing the majority of interpretive themes, with a unique opportunity to explore the development of our nation's environmental ethic through the Hetch Hetchy story.

4.1.4. [Tuolumne Meadows](#)

The Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River flows through this scenic high-elevation portal to the Yosemite Wilderness. Traditional visitor services will be provided here, including guided walks, campfires, informal roving, and multi-day guided adventures. A diverse range of interpretive themes will be addressed in Tuolumne Meadows.

4.1.5. [Yosemite Valley](#)

John Muir’s “incomparable valley” is one of the National Park Service’s iconic places - as well as an inspiration for the national park idea. The Merced Wild and Scenic River, El Capitan, Half Dome, and Yosemite Falls form the scenic backdrop that a majority of visitors travel here to experience. The NPS joins a large number of partners delivering the full spectrum of visitor services here, addressing all of the park’s interpretive themes through film, exhibits, guided walks, tram tours, evening programs, self-guided experiences, volunteer opportunities, and much more.

4.1.6. [Wawona](#)

With its historic hotel and grounds, Wawona Visitor Center at Hill’s Studio, and Pioneer Yosemite History Center, Wawona is home to a traditional national park experience. Tours, demonstrations, stage rides, exhibits, and campfire programs are all part of this traditional experience and focus on natural and cultural history themes.

4.2. General Recommendations

- 4.2.1. Support planning team efforts in development of materials for Yosemite Anniversary activities through 2016.
- 4.2.2. Participate fully in the development of concession contracts, ensuring interpretation and education standards are included, and partners are supported.
- 4.2.3. Develop stronger relationships and connections with the Division of Resources Management and Science to keep current on resource knowledge and emerging issues in resource protection.
- 4.2.4. Assist concessioners by helping to facilitate expeditious review of operations proposals presented to Business and Revenue Management staff.
- 4.2.5. Secure sustainable funding for Yosemite’s award-winning Deaf Services Program.

- 4.2.6. Establish program of temporary signage to recognize volunteer accomplishments throughout the park, similar to “your fee dollars at work” signs.

4.3. Educational Programming

4.3.1. Educational Facilities

- 4.3.1.1. Promote and support development of a new environmental [education campus](#) for NatureBridge’s park based programming.
- 4.3.1.2. Lead the development of a new fundraising agreement between the NPS and NatureBridge.
- 4.3.1.3. Work with NatureBridge to develop appropriate and expanded indoor and outdoor programming space.

4.3.2. Programs

- 4.3.2.1. Implement [Adventure Risk Challenge](#) program through the Yosemite Leadership Program at UC Merced.
- 4.3.2.2. Collaborate with Visitor and Resource Protection Division and SNRI to develop new curriculum related to literacy and environmental leadership for diverse Yosemite Leadership Program students.
- 4.3.2.3. Work with NatureBridge to uphold NPS Interpretive Development Program standards for delivery of education programs.
- 4.3.2.4. Expand [Environmental Living Program](#) and continue collaboration with the Field Branch in the execution of the program. Explore opportunities for further collaboration with NatureBridge in delivery of the program.
- 4.3.2.5. Expand [Parks as Classrooms](#) and provide staffing for Education Branch to resume coordination of the program. Redirect Centennial Initiative funding toward this effort.
- 4.3.2.6. Develop service-learning opportunities for students in the park.

4.3.3. Internships

- 4.3.3.1. Continue collaboration with Yosemite Conservancy, UC Merced, and the Divisions of Visitor and Resource Protection, and Resources Management and Science, in support of the SNRI Internship program and other youth programs and internships opportunities.

4.3.4. Staffing

- 4.3.4.1. Redirect Centennial Initiative funding to support two seasonal education technicians to deliver educational programming at various locations in the park.

4.4. Interpretive Services**4.4.1. Publications**

- 4.4.1.1. Support consistent messaging and graphic cohesion with NPS Division of Interpretation and Education maintaining approval/editing rights for all interpretive products developed for the public throughout the park [e.g. wilderness education, fire information, Preventative Search and Rescue (PSAR), RMS, etc.].
- 4.4.1.2. Utilize recent visitor studies to improve informational publications by focusing on needs from the visitors' perspective, not just NPS needs for the visitor.
- 4.4.1.3. Develop "passive interpretation" opportunities parkwide for visitors in restrooms, waiting in line, at picnic areas, etc., promoting water conservation, bear awareness, climate change, and other park messages.

4.4.2. Technology

- 4.4.2.1. Create apps, podcasts and other electronic media for visitors to use on site for wayfinding, information, and interpretive experiences.
- 4.4.2.2. Explore and develop site-specific tours for personal electronic media.

- 4.4.2.3. Create download centers where visitors can access new digital media on site.

- 4.4.2.4. Expand digital [weather stations](#) where appropriate.

4.4.3. Staffing

- 4.4.3.1. Secure sustainable funding for permanent audio-visual technician.
- 4.4.3.2. Reclassify writer-editor as interpretive specialist.

4.4.4. Campgrounds

- 4.4.4.1. Improve information and orientation bulletin boards in all park campgrounds, providing consistent and attractive materials to enhance wayfinding and promote participation in stewardship activities and interpretive programming.

4.4.5. Glacier Point

- 4.4.5.1. Enhance information/orientation opportunities between Chinquapin and Glacier Point.

4.4.6. Mariposa Grove

- 4.4.6.1. Design and install new exhibits at the Grove trailhead and along the trails.
- 4.4.6.2. Serve on core team for comprehensive planning of restoration and new visitor experience facilities in the Grove including visitor/transit center, restrooms, and trailhead.

4.4.7. Mather District/Hetch Hetchy

- 4.4.7.1. Improve signs and wayfinding throughout the district. Develop Yosemite Conservancy and Recreation Fee proposals to support this effort.
- 4.4.7.2. Promote a capital campaign for the rehabilitation of the Tuolumne Grove visitor experience, including trails, waysides, parking, and more.

- 4.4.7.3. Identify formal tours (e.g., bus groups) that use the Tuolumne Grove as a primary stop, and offer information to these groups to facilitate more meaningful and safe experiences.
- 4.4.7.4. Support and participate in planning efforts to renovate the Big Oak Flat entrance including a new office and visitor center complex.

4.4.8. Tuolumne Meadows

- 4.4.8.1. Participate in development of interpretive exhibits and facilities outlined in the Tuolumne River Plan alternatives. Work with core team to ensure priorities are part of NPS preferred alternative.
- 4.4.8.2. Support concessioner interpretation at High Sierra Camps that provides interpretive opportunities in camp buildings, on camp signs, and on bulletin boards.
- 4.4.8.3. Collaborate with Yosemite Conservancy to expand and/or adjust sales items in Tuolumne Visitor Center bookstore to more directly reflect Tuolumne resources and visitor preferences.

4.4.9. Wawona

- 4.4.9.1. Improve directional signs for WVC and Pioneer Yosemite History Center (PYHC). ACCOMPLISHED 2011
- 4.4.9.2. Improve informational and interpretive signs for Wawona Meadow Loop Trail. ACCOMPLISHED 2011
- 4.4.9.3. Work with Facilities Management to rehabilitate historic structures at PYHC.

4.4.10. Yosemite Valley

- 4.4.10.1. Work with NatureBridge to develop public displays in visitor centers and at Happy Isles Nature Center that highlight stewardship contributions of NatureBridge students and programs.

- 4.4.10.2. Work with Project Management to improve Yosemite Village wayfinding. ACCOMPLISHED 2011
- 4.4.10.3. Improve visibility of Wilderness Education Center, considering alternative locations within Yosemite Village.
- 4.4.10.4. Install network access at Valley Visitor Center front desk for improved customer service and weather information.
- 4.4.10.5. Promote improvements to Curry Village, Yosemite Lodge, and Lower River Amphitheaters.
- 4.4.10.6. Partner with concessioner and Yosemite Winter Club to enhance interpretation at locations such as Badger Pass and The Ahwahnee Winter Club Room.

4.4.11. Parkwide Retail Operations

- 4.4.11.1. Work with park cooperators and concessioners to develop and promote products with interpretive messaging whenever possible.
- 4.4.11.2. Improve visibility and consistency of Yosemite Conservancy stores, especially Wawona Visitor Center and Happy Isles Nature Center. Offer products that reflect mission values and are revenue-generating.
- 4.4.11.3. Annually review Yosemite Conservancy Scope of Sales for new opportunities.
- 4.4.11.4. Expand Yosemite Conservancy sales areas wherever feasible and appropriate.
- 4.4.11.5. Work with park partners to approve and promote official anniversary merchandise.

4.4.12. Publishing (Yosemite Conservancy)

- 4.4.12.1. Separate budget from retail operation.
- 4.4.12.2. Secure multi-year funding for projects.
- 4.4.12.3. Expand Junior Ranger publications (senior, wilderness, seasons, and more).
- 4.4.12.4. Establish a 'heritage fund' for publications with high interpretive value but limited revenue potential.

4.4.12.5. Update and redesign current Yosemite Conservancy products (*Complete Guidebook to Yosemite National Park, Yosemite Road Guide, Photographers Guide*).

4.4.12.6. Create a revolving fund of \$300k so projects can be initiated quickly.

4.5. Museum Programming

4.5.1. Publications

4.5.1.1. Create and publish an archives guide.

4.5.1.2. Create a fact sheet related to the Yosemite Museum Collection.

4.5.1.3. Create and publish a museum guide.

4.5.2. Exhibits

4.5.2.1. Continue to display Yosemite's magnificent museum collection through revolving exhibits in the Museum Gallery.

4.5.2.2. Formalize the relationship with Yosemite Renaissance through an official agreement, and continue to promote its annual competition and exhibition.

4.5.2.3. Update content in Indian Cultural Exhibit, including addition of a timeline.

4.5.3. Digitize Collections

4.5.3.1. Digitize historic film and audiotapes in collection.

4.5.4. Tours

4.5.4.1. Develop curator's tour of permanent and temporary exhibits for staff, partners, and volunteers.

4.5.5. Oral History

4.5.5.1. Continue to seek funding for the oral history project.

4.5.5.2. Capture oral histories as opportunities and funding permit.

4.5.6. Facilities

4.5.6.1. Secure funding for the design and installation of a fire system to protect the historic museum building including exhibits, collection storage, and office space.

4.5.6.2. Secure funding for appropriate HVAC systems for the historic building to provide appropriate environment for the exhibits, collections storage, and office space.

4.5.6.3. Continue participation in the Museum planning effort to pursue improvement of existing facilities and development of new facilities to improve staff and public access, and expand exhibit space(s) for the collection.

4.5.6.4. Explore opportunities to gain additional storage and work space to alleviate overcrowded conditions in museum, library, and archives spaces, and to remove items from substandard storage areas.

4.5.7. Procedures/Collections Management

4.5.7.1. Develop a procedure to notify staff of new acquisitions.

4.5.7.2. Promote enhanced records management through annual training program.

4.5.7.3. Improve collection documentation to bring catalog records to current standards.

4.5.7.4. Make progress in cataloging un-cataloged acquisitions to make these materials available for use by staff, researchers, and visitors.

4.5.7.5. Continue re-housing and upgrading museum collections storage to protect this resource for future research, access, and exhibition.

4.5.7.6. Complete Ethnographic Collection Condition Survey to assess current condition of park's ethnographic collection, and make recommendations for exhibit, storage, and treatment.

4.5.7.7. Complete fine arts conservation treatment for collections preservation and exhibition.

4.5.7.8. Complete Photograph and Paper Collection Condition Survey to assess current condition of park's photographic

and paper collections, and make recommendations for exhibit, storage, and treatment.

- 4.5.7.9. Complete recommended treatment of *Cosmopolitan Register* to stabilize it for exhibit and research use.

4.5.8. Research Library

- 4.5.8.1. Continue to provide on-site research and public contact facility in Yosemite Valley for visitors, staff, and partners.
- 4.5.8.2. Continue to provide photocopies, scans, and other copies of library and museum materials for public use.
- 4.5.8.3. Develop library collection to meet the needs of staff, partners, volunteers, and park visitors.
- 4.5.8.4. Continue to remove out-of-scope or unnecessary materials from library collection to make space for new acquisitions.

4.6. Personal Services

4.6.1. Coaching and Training

- 4.6.1.1. Continue successful seasonal GS-9 interpretive coaching position, providing interpretive coaching to all partners parkwide. Support continued funding of this position through Yosemite Conservancy Bob Hansen endowment or Concession Franchise Fee 80% funding.
- 4.6.1.2. Continue NPS leadership and support role in seasonal training for all park interpretive partners.
- 4.6.1.3. Support primary concessioner effort to provide professional interpretive certification for all associates working with the public as interpreters, tour bus drivers, stables guides, mountaineering guides, and more.
- 4.6.1.4. Collaborate with primary concessioner in hosting annual NAI training such as Certified Interpretive Guide, Host, and Trainer courses.

4.6.2. Housing

- 4.6.2.1. Promote field staff housing within park districts to promote immersive experiences for staff and better service to visitors.
- 4.6.2.2. Work with Inyo National Forest to promote interagency housing in Lee Vining Canyon.
- 4.6.2.3. Continue to seek housing solutions for partners such as Yosemite Conservancy, Sierra Club, and volunteers, particularly in Yosemite Valley.
- 4.6.2.4. Promote developed volunteer campsites and allotment system throughout the park.

4.6.3. Glacier Point

- 4.6.3.1. Coordinate and approve all interpretive and educational programming at Glacier Point Amphitheater.
- 4.6.3.2. Continue to promote and expand partnerships in providing night sky interpretation.

4.6.4. Mariposa Grove

- 4.6.4.1. If a new contact station is added as part of the Mariposa Grove Restoration Project, staff it, providing information, orientation, and a launch point for interpretive roving and programming.
- 4.6.4.2. Provide for volunteer staffing (by Yosemite Conservancy) of the Grove Museum.
- 4.6.4.3. Increase assistance to Fire Management during burning operations.

4.6.5. Mather District/Hetch Hetchy

- 4.6.5.1. Enhance administrative space for district staff at both White Wolf and Big Oak Flat (BOF).
- 4.6.5.2. Develop and promote plans for a campfire circle or amphitheater at Hodgdon Meadows Campground.

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- 4.6.5.3. In campgrounds—a launch point to other park destinations—focus personal services on orientation and information related to this visitor need, as well as promoting activities and programs within the district.
- 4.6.5.4. Expand personal services being offered at Dimond O Campground, Evergreen Lodge, Camp Mather, and Camp Tawonga. Develop a closer relationship with facility managers at these locations and seek to partner in delivery of visitor services. Increase opportunities for Junior Ranger and stewardship programs at these family-oriented locations.
- 4.6.5.5. Identify tour groups (e.g., bus groups) that use the Tuolumne Grove as a key destination. Offer guided tours to enhance the experience and safety of these groups as well as resource protection.

4.6.6. Tuolumne Meadows

- 4.6.6.1. Continue active core team participation for the Tuolumne River Plan, promoting the role and function of Interpretation and Education, and ensuring continued housing of interpreters and educators in the Tuolumne Meadows area.
- 4.6.6.2. Continue to offer a broad range of interpretive programs in Tuolumne Meadows.
- 4.6.6.3. Continue to offer Parsons Memorial Lodge Summer Series and secure sustainable funding for the same.

4.6.7. Wawona

- 4.6.7.1. Continue or expand partnerships with area hotels and businesses to support personal interpretive services in the district.
- 4.6.7.2. Continue successful collaboration in operation of Wawona Visitor Center at Hill's Studio.
- 4.6.7.3. Restore volunteer and paid staffing levels to fully operate the Pioneer Yosemite History Center.
- 4.6.7.4. Repair and improve office space for district staff.

4.6.8. Yosemite Valley

- 4.6.8.1. Establish partnerships with the Yosemite Climbing Association to enhance interpretation of big wall climbing.
- 4.6.8.2. Continue to work with primary concessioner to complete upgrades to Yosemite Lodge indoor venues to ensure high-quality visitor experiences.
- 4.6.8.3. Identify funding to increase Indian cultural demonstrator staff, or find creative solutions to increase program offerings.
- 4.6.8.4. Partner with tribal groups to coordinate complementary Indian cultural programming at the new Indian Cultural Center.
- 4.6.8.5. Establish GS-9 supervisory positions to assist Valley Operations Supervisor with span of control during peak season.
- 4.6.8.6. Continue to expand assigned roving time and locations, reaching multi-cultural audiences in other languages as often as possible.
- 4.6.8.7. Designate a liaison with Search and Rescue (SAR) and Safety Office to develop and maintain effective PSAR and safety messages in key areas.
- 4.6.8.8. Collaborate with partners to ensure the continued success of Yosemite Theater.
- 4.6.8.9. Coordinate and support traditional and new public programming by primary interpretive partners including DNC, Sierra Club, TAAG, and Yosemite Conservancy.
- 4.6.8.10. Work with concessioners/other partners to develop standard operating procedures for special events such as National Park Family Day, National Park Week, and Earth Day.
- 4.6.8.11. Continue to expand Junior Ranger and other interpretive program offerings.
- 4.6.8.12. Continue to support sustainable funding for Public Information Office staffing to provide information and orientation for park visitors.

4.6.9. Volunteers

- 4.6.9.1. Increase volunteer opportunities parkwide related to interpretation and education.
- 4.6.9.2. Collaborate with partners and NPS volunteer program to support increased volunteer recruiting, housing, funding, and utilization.
- 4.6.9.3. Designate a Division Volunteer Coordinator to provide leadership and coordination across branches and districts.
- 4.6.9.4. Actively participate on the Volunteer Leadership Team.
- 4.6.9.5. Integrate volunteer programs into interpretation and education program marketing.

4.6.10. Outdoor Classroom Program (Yosemite Conservancy)

- 4.6.10.1. Support education director with sustainable external funds.
- 4.6.10.2. Grow capability for custom programming.
- 4.6.10.3. Explore new curriculum opportunities and pilot new programs annually.
- 4.6.10.4. Continue to pursue grant support, especially to support cultural diversity efforts.
- 4.6.10.5. Set strategic goals for Yosemite Art and Education Center.
- 4.6.10.6. Conduct trips to China sister parks, plan for trip to Chile sister park, and explore future international programs such as Scotland, John Muir's homeland.
- 4.6.10.7. Solicit regular external underwriting for support.

4.6.11. Anniversary Program

- 4.6.11.1. Collaborate with various park staff, park partners, concessions, organizations, and outlying communities to successfully craft and implement the Anniversary Program Strategic Plan.
- 4.6.11.2. Organize, work with, and manage Anniversary Program Committees: Steering, PR/Marketing, Retail, Events, Programs, and Executive.

- 4.6.11.3. Work with Outreach and Engagement staff to establish and maintain in-reach and outreach efforts for anniversary information dissemination and support.
Work with Public Affairs Office staff to coordinate anniversary media coverage, press releases, talking points, and legislative needs (commemorative stamp, mint, etc.)
- 4.6.11.4. Work with park Indian cultural liaison to ensure associated tribes are engaged as they desire to be.
- 4.6.11.5. Work with Indian cultural demonstration staff to provide appropriate anniversary programming.
- 4.6.11.6. Work with museum staff to provide appropriate anniversary exhibits installed in the museum.
- 4.6.11.7. Work with park librarian to provide appropriate anniversary opportunities utilizing the rich library resources.
- 4.6.11.8. Work with park archives to provide appropriate anniversary opportunities utilizing the rich resources in the archives.
- 4.6.11.9. Work with Yosemite Employee Association to ensure that the greater Yosemite Community is engaged in the anniversary—including seeking out special enhancement projects for the community.
- 4.6.11.10. Work with frontline staff via annual training to encourage and ensure unique anniversary interpretive programs.
- 4.6.11.11. Implement Anniversary Program (events, programs, and projects) throughout 2013-2016 to take place both inside the park and outside the park.

4.7. Volunteer Program

- 4.7.1. Establish formal division volunteer coordinator responsibilities and identify responsible individuals for the five primary volunteer-use divisions—Interpretation and Education, Resources Management and Science, Facilities, Visitor and Resource Protection, and Business and Revenue Management.
- 4.7.2. Support drop-in volunteering through effective marketing, partnerships, and needs assessment in divisions.
- 4.7.3. Work with partners to address volunteer and internship reimbursement issues related to IRS and NPS regulations.
- 4.7.4. Work with partners and divisions to increase work-week offerings, creating episodic volunteer opportunities.
- 4.7.5. Create local volunteer engagement and training program to keep volunteers who serve outside the park connected to park resources.
- 4.7.6. Work with tribes in support of volunteers serving in new Indian Cultural Center.
- 4.7.7. Work with new Environmental Education Center to examine opportunities for volunteer program use of campus for lodging, training, etc.
- 4.7.8. Develop strategic vision for volunteer program with partners, as directed in DO-7.
- 4.7.9. Establish volunteer center in Yosemite Valley, including offices for NPS Volunteer Office staff, partners in the volunteer program, gathering area for volunteer recognition and training, convenient access for potential volunteers, and serving the needs of long-term resident volunteers.
- 4.7.10. Continue the use of Yellow Pine as a campground for priority volunteer use, and upgrade to meet campground sanitation, sustainability, safety, and accessibility standards.
- 4.7.11. Develop effective evaluation tools for group and drop-in program participants.

5. General Operational Recommendations

5.1. Accessibility

- 5.1.1. Upgrade facilities, programs, and media to meet universal accessibility standards. It is critical that facilities, programs, and media are retrofitted or replaced to meet universal accessibility standards, not only to comply with federal regulations, but also to make the park and its interpretive themes available to all audiences, particularly those with physical or learning disabilities. Secure long-term funding for the Deaf Services program through Concession Franchise Fees.

5.2. Funding

- 5.2.1. Continual development and refinement of new and old funding sources and proposals will enhance opportunities to advance the mission of interpretation and education in Yosemite. Enhancing financial support through park partners, updating and improving OFS proposals, developing proposals for Concession Franchise Fees, working with RMS on interpretive and volunteer components for projects, and more is necessary to achieve the outcomes set forth in this document.

5.3. Publication Review and Approval

- 5.3.1. Publications and display materials for public information, interpretation, or education are created by many NPS divisions for a variety of purposes. It is important that these efforts have some coordination and that the park speaks with a consistent voice, message, and style. Publications produced by all divisions of the NPS for public interpretation, information, and orientation should be reviewed and approved by the Division of Interpretation and Education. Items including, but not limited to fact sheets, site bulletins, trail brochures, books, newsletters, flyers, and posters should be submitted to the Branch Chief for Interpretive Services prior to publication and distribution.

- 5.3.2. Partner-produced products should be submitted to the Interpretive Management Team (IMT) for review and approval. Ideas should be vetted with the team before production begins to allow for collaboration and avoid duplication of effort. Specific policies are in place for review of concession products through the Division of Business and Revenue Management.

5.4. Administration & Management

- 5.4.1. Ensure that all division positions are current, classified appropriately, and properly placed on the division organizational chart.
- 5.4.2. Continuously update division OFS request to reflect growth in all five branches.
- 5.4.3. Ensure Interpretation and Education participation in all inter-divisional work groups and planning teams.
- 5.4.4. Partner with other divisions to increase administrative support.

5.5. Interpretation of American Indian Culture

- 5.5.1. Yosemite has a strong tradition related to interpretation of Indian culture in the Yosemite region. The NPS Indian Cultural Program in the Field Operations Branch takes a lead role in guiding how these stories are told. Park interpreters, both Indian and non-Indian share the responsibility to respectfully and accurately communicate the history of native people in Yosemite, while acknowledging and respecting multiple perspectives related to this history. Traditional stories that are published (i.e. Tissiak, Tutokanoolah, Ahale) are free to be shared by all park interpreters. Personal stories belonging to individual Indian people must be “gifted” before they can be told by others. As often as possible, new interpretive programs, exhibits, and publications involving the culture and practices of native people are passed through the park’s Indian cultural liaison for tribal review and comment.

5.6. Tribal Partnerships and Cooperation

- 5.6.1. Continue active participation in All Tribes meetings.
- 5.6.2. Consult with park Tribal Liaison and tribal representatives as needed for new program ideas and use of traditionally sacred objects in interpretive and educational programming.
- 5.6.3. Work closely with the American Indian Council of Mariposa County (AICMC) in the development of programming for the new Indian Cultural Center at Wahhoga near Camp 4.
- 5.6.4. Work with AICMC to establish camping needs far enough in advance to minimize impact to volunteer programs whenever possible.

5.7. Evaluation

One of the pillars of the Interpretive Renaissance is creating a culture of evaluation. There is very little scientifically valid information about the direct outcomes and impact of interpretation and education programs. Evaluation must become an integral part of program design and delivery to ensure ongoing program improvement, effectiveness, and efficiency. In pursuit of this goal, Yosemite’s interpretation and education programs will:

- 5.7.1. Conduct front-end evaluation in development of major exhibits and publications.
- 5.7.2. Recruit and hire seasonal GS-7 and GS-9 mentor-interpreters to evaluate and coach personal interpretive services for NPS and partners. Secure Concession Franchise Fees to fund this program.
- 5.7.3. Solicit grant funding and work with universities, Yosemite’s RMS Branch of Visitor Use and Social Science, and external agencies (such as Stephen F. Austin State University) to conduct visitor studies related to interpretive outcomes and impact, visitor and non-visitor characteristics, cultural and economic barriers to park access, and other relevant topics.
- 5.7.4. Engage social scientists in the park and the agency in developing better tools for the evaluation of interpretive products, services, and programs.

- 5.7.5. Foster cross-training and cross-coaching with Yosemite's interpretive partners.
- 5.7.6. Increase focus on product certification for permanent NPS staff within the Interpretive Development Program.
- 5.7.7. Incorporate evaluation into all ongoing programs, and improve those programs based on feedback.

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