

Correspondence ID: 1 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,10,2015 23:49:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: To accommodate the ever increasing number of visitors, we should expand the trail system. More trails in different parts of the park will distribute visitors and will mitigate overcrowding. We should also expand existing trails to support higher visitor levels. This should include the addition of bathrooms and access to drinking water. Trail quotas should be increased to allow a broad spectrum of people to enjoy the park. I would propose to severely limit the number of stock users. Stock users are causing a disproportionate amount of damage to the environment and are primarily used by the elite or 1%. Our national parks should be there for all people and not provide special treatment to the elite that can afford stock use.

Correspondence ID: 2 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,23,2015 13:57:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The concessions seem to be managed properly.

Topic Question 2:

Access, daytime traffic, campgrounds, Trash.

Comments: The NPS should limit the daytime traffic via a reservation system. On uniquely American holidays (4th of July) foreign tour buses should not be allowed. Campgrounds in Tuolumne Meadows should be revamped to accommodate today's camping vehicles. Campground Roads and campsite pads should be leveled and improved. Electricity should be added where feasible. Bike paths should be added throughout Tuolumne Meadows. Fines for littering should be stepped up particularly on the trail systems. Campfire and quiet time in campgrounds should be moved to 11pm.

Correspondence ID: 3 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,23,2015 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Placing people in group campground in high demand areas (Merced Lake, Vogelsang, LYV, etc.), requiring bear canisters, and email reservation for permits are all working well.

Topic Question 2:

Limiting overnight visitors - the permit quota is too large, and the wilderness quality is starting to decrease. This is particularly true along the PCT/JMT corridor. Also, commercial stock use in Virginia Canyon is highly destructive (and I see them in lower Spiller Canyon too, against their permit).

We need outhouses along the PCT/JMT - simply too many users period, but also too many who don't care enough. The scores of thru hikers are changing the wilderness quality of the backcountry.

Comments: Get tough as they are in the Grand Canyon. We need more foot patrol rangers who are willing to cite for infractions such as illegal campfires and out of bounds camping. Right now, there is little fear of citations, so too many do as they please.

Correspondence ID: 4 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,23,2015 16:55:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the High Sierra camps - because they allow people who otherwise could not make it to the back country (i.e., age, disability) the ability to experience everything Yosemite has to offer. Please consider preserving these incredibly unique series of camps. Don't let the back country be only for the young and fit (and super well equipped!). The High Sierra camps offer a wide range of people something no other U.S. national park offers. The environmental impact is small compared to the benefit the camps offer to folks willing to get out of their cars and make a true effort to see the back country!

Topic Question 2:

To be honest, it is likely climate change. Yet under the guise of preservation, the movement to abolish (or severely limit) the High Sierra Camps should be stopped (see reasons above). Please, please preserve this unique way of allowing all ages and those with disabilities (perhaps not all, but a large number) to experience the back country. Without the High Sierra Camps, most people will only see Yosemite from their cars.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 5 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,24,2015 11:38:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the fact that the NPS attempts to limit overuse and preserve wilderness values through trailhead quotas and limiting group size for on and off-trail travel. I also value that the wilderness permit system gives the rangers opportunities to reinforce LNT principles and bear canister requirements.

Topic Question 2:

1) The most important issue to me is overuse of certain trail corridors and abused use by some PCT permit holders (i.e., getting a permit for the entire PCT with no intention of hiking the entire PCT but allowing for JMT and Half Dome trail use).

2) I remain concerned with the quality of the wilderness experience due to overuse and inappropriate use (social impacts from those not following LNT).

3) Trail management (construction, maintenance, quotas) is an area needing further study with consideration given to non-maintenance and removal of "improvements" which diminish the wilderness character of the area, including historical use such as High Sierra Camps and other nonconforming uses

(Half Dome cables, etc.).

4) I support a study of the use of stock in the wilderness to mitigate damage, though I am not opposed to limited stock use where appropriate.

5) Commercial services can be an effective means of providing wilderness experiences with LNT emphasis which can help to protect the wilderness and important values if the service is vetted appropriately.

Comments: I encourage the NPS to look carefully at studying the identified aspects of visitor use and capacity, stock use, trail management and commercial services as means to protect the wilderness character (the resource) and not to provide mass recreation which degrades the wilderness. Responsible use by prepared and responsible individuals and groups is necessary to both preserve and protect while allowing for continued use within the carrying capacity of the resource. Backcountry LE Rangers and trained volunteers need to be provided to educate and enforce the rules and regulations.

Correspondence ID: 6 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,24,2015 16:52:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

Soil erosion and meadow damage due to have trail and campsite use. Non-native and invasive species. Over crowding diminishing the wilderness experience in some locations.

Comments: Suggest U-Streaming your public meetings to get out your key messages. There are many who will not be able to attend who value the Yosemite Wilderness and could provide important comments.

Correspondence ID: 7 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,25,2015 00:47:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the trails and their maintenance, and the High Sierra Camps with their corresponding backpacker camps, which make it possible to explore more of the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

One thing park service is doing is removing species of non-native fish to bring back some native frogs. Park Service was once very proud of stocking these wilderness lakes with fish, but now they are slaughtering fish to correct their mistakes. I believe they should either leave the fish alone, or move them to other lakes without killing them.

It is my opinion that the killing of deer mice in response to Hanta Virus and the poisoning of squirrels in response to the Plague are extreme reactions. Park Service can use the same, or possibly lesser funds, to educate the public on avoiding these natural diseases rather than killing potentially harmless creatures. There are way too many park visitors who think it is a good idea to feed the animals. It is those humans who should be punished, not the animals. Another issue at hand is the use of stock in the wilderness. Mules and horses are used by packers to take supplies to the High Sierra Camps, and to lead trips through the High Sierra, many times for people who otherwise could not be on the trails due to physical impairments or old age. The stock have an obvious impact on the trails, but you never see them off of the trails, nor have I personally ever seen them grazing in meadows or feeding on native plants. The cowboys and packers do an excellent job of keeping the stock fed at the stables and at the corrals. I do not think stock should be limited any more than they are now, they pose no real threat to the environment and add a lot of personality to the high sierra, as well as giving the High Sierra Camps the opportunity to operate, which in turn gives many visitors the opportunity of exploring and experiencing parts of the Yosemite wilderness that they would otherwise not see.

Easy to get to locations in the Wilderness, such as May Lake, Cathedral Lakes, and others see a lot of day hikers, and these day hikers are often uninformed. I have asked hikers such as these to put out illegal fires, take their dogs back to their cars, and to pack out their trash. More work has to be done by NPS to educate all park visitors, especially those who are not used to being in the outdoors and in the wilderness. Those who do love and respect the wilderness, like myself, have no problem in educating such people, as it is for our own good, but I can't help but think that for every person I catch with a dangerously sized fire, or setting up camp in a non-durable area, there are many more who are getting away with it.

As far as commercial use and activity, I think it is great to have guides available for those who need them. Newcomers to the wilderness or those who aren't completely comfortable yet can benefit greatly by using such a service. Saddle trips and food and accommodation should continue as it is now. Any new service should be approved by the park.

Comments: The wilderness is a wonderful place for myself and many others. It is where I go to heal and to experience life, it is where I find God. My main concern is the misuse of the wilderness by uneducated people, and the killing of animals by Park Service.

I believe education is the key to protecting the wilderness. I believe the High Sierra Camps and stock should stay, as they allow and facilitate this education to take place, and enable the wilderness experience for those who are educated but are of advanced age and could otherwise not enjoy spending some nights in the high sierra.

I believe that killing mice and squirrels is not the way to fix our mistakes. Again, education is the key.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my views.

Correspondence ID: 8 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,25,2015 12:06:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Reverting Tuolumne Meadows and the Tioga Road to wilderness in the winter months, effectively keeping snow mobiles and other motorized vehicles out. This is an example I wish Yellowstone would follow.

Topic Question 2:

Over use has become an issue. The quota system put in place over Donahue pass due to record numbers of PCT and JMT permits being pulled was brilliant. I heard not one complaint from through hikers about it. Diverting hikers to other trail heads worked well. (I work at Vermilion Valley Resort in

the summer and was at Tioga Pass Resort for 8 years.)

My biggest concern is over use of stock by the concessionaire and the High Sierra Camps. I hear complaints about these all the time. The High Sierra Camps are a direct violation of the spirit of the wilderness act. It's my belief, after years of observing and discussing this with others, that it's time these camps go. They served their purpose. Letting the concessionaire do leave no trace pack trips would be a suitable replacement for those who want to enjoy the wilderness but are not physically able to backpack or day hike into these places.

My secondary concern, and this is a big one, is the impact of smoke from fires. It has gotten so bad that I may not be able to work summers at VVR any more. It's taken me months to get over a respiratory infection I got in August. So many hikers had to leave the trail, a trip of a lifetime, due to this impact. I hiked the Lost Coast Trail in October. Then did a shorter trip in Redwood NP. I asked the ranger who issued our permit about any impact they may have seen due to the fires in the Sierra pushing hikers to the coast. It was substantial. One one day in August, 450 permits were issued for the northern portion of the LCT alone. This is a 30 mile stretch along sensitive coastline. I can't even imagine how awful that must have been. The impact we saw in October was appalling, mostly human waste and TP flags, but plenty of other trash as well. He told us that they were making plans to implement a quota system for the LCT, something they have never had to do before. We talked at great length about the smoke impact and left it praying for the drought to end.

So fire and fuel load management is a huge concern for wilderness areas and the users. Heavy timber management in the surrounding National Forests doesn't seem to be going anywhere. (Which brings up the need to put the Forests under the DOI and to substantially increase funding. UGH)

Comments: Stock use can be managed in a way to greatly reduce the impact on the trails. I have observed first hand how stock is loaded for the HS camps and it's wasteful and appalling.

A friend and I witnessed stock being loaded at the May Lake TH, about 7 years ago. Seeing boxes of single serving hot cocoa and instant oatmeal being put in the panniers was enough for me. They were just hauling trash in! That they then need to haul out. I found this incredibly wasteful. We hung around to watch, while my friend took pictures. (He was so incensed I had to stop him from confronting the packers, who I knew were just doing what they were told.)

I worked at a pack station for 2 summers. They never packed stuff like that. They required guests to use bulk ingredients, canned beer, and to pre package stuff as much as possible to reduce trash needing to be hauled out. They also required guests to use backpacking equipment. No more tent cabins, no more giant heavy stoves and such. Really discouraged big ice chests full of beer. This greatly reduces the amount of stock needed, which greatly reduces impact. We policed guests in camp and actively taught leave no trace. (Shout out to McGee Creek Pack Station!)

The other part of this scenario was mis-treatment of the stock itself. Those panniers should have been packed and weighed before they were loaded up. As it was, this process took a long time, mule by mule. The first mule they loaded had a heavy load. He stood there for almost an hour with his load while they were fussing with loading panniers and then loading the other stock. I observed him shifting his feet, moving back and forth, raising and lowering his head, leaning on the lead rope and big sighs of resignation. All signs of serious discomfort. How long can YOU stand around with a fully loaded back pack? It's a poor way to treat a good mule.

It seemed to me they could have done with 2 less mules if those loads had been packed properly. I did mention it to the manager in Tuolumne. (His name escapes me and we have spoken often, sorry)

In closing I'd like to say that I think Yosemite is relatively well managed, given such a restricted budget. I don't like the concessionaire system and wish we could get appropriate funding for the Parks and bring them back to their former glory. Another shout out to Gator, or Mike Gauthier for helping turn the tide in Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 9 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,26,2015 12:08:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I like the wild of the wilderness. This is facilitated by the commercial nature of the valley. 4 million annual visitors can trek in via the highways and scenic byways to see the 8th Wonder of the World. This accessibility has always been essential to the core of the National Park Experience, the very essence of the National Park existence. The opportunity with creative effort to experience Nature with minimal commercialization underlies our emotional attachment to the grandeur encompassing all our National Parks. That said, some ability to access the backcountry via the groomed cross country ski trails, maintained horse trails, cut steps of popular misty trails, road access via relatively short roads ala Glacier, Hetchey, Tioga are vital to those whose physical conditions don't allow deep physical penetration to Thoreau's other ponds. I value the fact that a tram doesn't top out at a hotel at Glacier Point (see a ski area globally.) I value the lack of a tunnelled cog train to the sublime pinnacle of El Capitan (see the Kitzbuhel.) I value merely the latent historical memory of a hotel in the middle of the Giant Staircase (see Kleine Scheidegg at the Eiger.) Thankfully jet boats don't run up Hetch Hetchy delivering otherwise capable hikers to a shortened Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne. Perhaps canoe or rowboat access for those best able to propel via arm strength is a rational compromise to allow a wilder experience. Horse/stock access to many backcountry areas and camps is equally or more valuable to those who trip upon a need for evacuation and rescue. High Sierra camps have been an essential element of the wilderness experience, even for extensive flint knapping, pine nut collecting and trans-national trade. Outside of the small area set aside for teaching and promoting the skills needed for winter enjoyment of the wilderness my ears rejoice in the silence of Winter. While hardley wilderness the Mariposa Grove revisions will faintly scream with giant mysticism at last with the disappearance of the rubber soled trams. I revel in the beauty and solitude defined in part by the shared joy flowing from masses yearning to see, if not bodily experience, the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Ironically, the lack of use in some areas of the wilderness promote the destruction of the very untamed forests we admire. When small fires checkerboarded the landscape large massively destructive fires were less common. The Air Resources Boards and EPA continue to work against themselves by restricting burns so much of the time. They have their mandates perhaps they should be modified. Promotion of natural burns in National Parks and other Lands can facilitate greater air quality in the long run by accelerating the return to smaller more frequent decompositions. Please work toward a greater range of allowed burn days. A wilder idea: Can the use of campfires and not so little trace methods in some areas of the wilderness provide valuable cleaning out of excess brush and woody debris. I picture the used but wild lands the earlier Native Americans presented to so many pioneers of Yosemite history. Would a horse be able to pass through the forest not pressed onto the same trail as all other horses? Some method of camp making between Leave-No-Trace and Native Ways could extend the fire management budgets.

A tram to the top of El Capitan or Glacier Point, no way, been there, read about the proposals, glad the hotel at Glacier Point burned, happy there's no

Starbucks at the Silver Apron Lodge, don't miss the fire fall (yes I saw it when very young.) Do we need a tramless cable to Half Dome? Why not cut steps? What is wilderness? The Ahwanee has the political advantages of Hetch Hetchy to balance the needs of wealthy influentials and the common democratic needs of the freely yearning masses. Can more parking be established just outside the boundaries with greater, read more frequent, bus/public transportation into the park? Might this lessen the rain driven traffic jams of mid summer, the mad rush to the cafeteria? Maybe a Marriot or Hilton designed in the Neo-frontier style of the great Park Monoliths are a better use of the meadows. Use of the most travelled paths defines the less travelled paths (thanks Robert Frost.) Will a few extra parking spaces managed by extending some of the existing pullouts destroy the nature of the wilderness or provide a convenient starting off point to see and use the less travelled paths? Can some portion of the 4 million annual visitors be encouraged to forgo extensive glacially slow traffic within the mystic canyons of Tenaya by being enabled to hike, canoe, equestriate, bus, or simply stop longer at renewed overlooks and trailheads. Like ice flowing I see some of these changes already occurring, for the better. I don't want to see an Ahwanee in Tuolumne or McGurk Meadows, but a parking garage at Badger can provide more parking within the same footprint plus other shelter options from time to time for park operations (not a sneaky hotel.) Can more people experience the wilderness by having greater access or will this change the nature of the wilderness. Must we be alone in the wild or can some odd sighting of other wilderness participants still promote the core concepts of wild?? Will the wilderness be more wild if discourage 4 million participants? Can The Valley be restored to wilderness as a preferred option Exhibit A? When I look at the 3,600,000 more common travelers versus the more affluent top 10% I wonder if at least a place to park before camping or hiking closer to the wilderness we seek provides a small encouragement to stay longer out of the valley and in the wild. Can I park at the pull outs? Are the approved spaces denoted as such? Where does this trailhead lead? Must I loop through the Valley to register? On a busy day where do I park to quickly get a wilder permit, certainly not in line at the entrance station! A great self-flagellant statement from tech-help-desks is the phrase: Its easy once you know how! Will the internet be the salvation? Can I know how to find access to the wilder wilderness without a smartphone app? Do simple signs help the flow of international visitors decrease their Ahwanic Wilderness exposures?

I like the improving historical overlooks, the bus to Glacier Point from Badger, the improved parking at Tuolumne Grove, the decreased roadside camping, the move of the Institute. I like the ski area as I like the paved roads and opportunity for a quick snack or hot meal. I like the interpretive centers because they teach me things I may not know or need to refresh. I still like the ski area, it provides teaching, quick snacks, hot meals and refreshes me on opposite ends of my wilderness experiences. Please keep the ski area (downhill, snowshoe, and cross country). Often the wilderness is defined equally by the edges of the wilderness as the middle of the Valley.

I have more ideas but have to go for a walk.

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	10	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Nov,27,2015 22:02:15				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Topic Question 1: What I Value & How It Might Be Managed				

I value wilderness for its natural processes, its natural beauty, and my ability to enjoy it, be challenged by it, and know, even vicariously, that it is there. I value that it is a place where humans cannot alter the natural processes and can't remain. I value that it is a place where nature dominates and that the character of wilderness is protected.

I value the challenges provided by muscle power to reach and traverse the wilderness. While the Yosemite Wilderness Management Plan addresses some types of motorized and mechanized equipment, it should address the prohibition of the use of other mechanized vehicles, such as hang gliders, airfoils, and other future devised products that are considered antithetical to the wilderness experience, such as skateboards.

I value a wilderness with limited impacts caused by human use. The impacts of human use - public, commercial or agency - should have minimal effects on the environment of the wilderness and its natural processes, and be visually insignificant to my eyes. Impacts caused by visitor use in specific areas are a significant issue facing the Yosemite Wilderness. Additional limitations on quotas, group size, day use, or number of consecutive nights of camping may be required in order to reduce those human impacts. Advertisement about contiguous wilderness areas that can handle additional use within their wilderness trailhead quotas might also be explored, after consultations and agreements are instituted with the contiguous National Forests.

I value an alpine and subalpine environment that does not contain the blackening of soils caused by charcoal remains of human fire pits, and broken limbs and trees and partially burned krumholtz. Lower the topographic height for excluding fires and firewood use to 9400 feet, and institute a regulation to prohibit fires in specific areas and around lakes that have limited deadwood production. Today's lightweight stoves can provide all the cooking needed in these areas.

I value a natural sound-scape that doesn't include mechanical sounds. I also value a trail that is cleared of down trees and limbs that stretch into the trail way. Create a lively, open discussion within the agency and the Park, as well as with the interested public, in regards to the use of chainsaws for trail maintenance in order to determine the public and internal perception of their use which will provide better understanding for the "deciding officer" of the Plan to completely or partially eliminate their use.

Topic Question 2:

In addition, in reference to the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Management Plan (YWP):

Pg. 17: "Day use travel on maintained trails is limited to groups of 35 or fewer..." This limit should be reduced to not exceed 15 persons at one time or stock at one time, regardless of whether the party is independent or serviced by any legal commercial operator in wilderness within the Park. Stock will not be permitted to travel cross country within wilderness.

Pg. 18: "The maximum size for administrative or private groups traveling overnight on established trails...is 25 people." This limit should be reduced permanently to not exceed 12 persons, unless the group is serviced by a legal commercial operator (one authorized to operate within the Park AND meets surrounding resource managing agency requirements), in which case the maximum group size may not exceed 15 persons at one time.

Pg. 18: "It is recognized that the use of pitons and expansion bolts damages the rock, but at this time no regulation of their use is in effect." No additional expansion bolts are permitted to be installed on any route where they have not existed at the time of passage of this new wilderness plan.

Pg. 19: "To protect bears, wilderness users are required to store their food properly by using bear cables, bear poles, etc." This policy should change to require that food and consumptive domestic products be stored only within effective, approved bear resistant devices when the visitor/camper/wilderness user is not within a timely reach of his camp.

There are many more issues that are important to me and to the management of the Yosemite Wilderness and I wish to be able to include my ideas and comments in future planning efforts.

References:

Wilderness Management Plan - Yosemite National Park 1989

Keeping it wild 2: An updated interagency strategy to monitor trends in wilderness character across the National Wilderness Preservation System; Landress, Peter, et al, 2015; <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/49721>

Comments: There are many more issues that are important to me and to the management of the Yosemite Wilderness and I wish to be able to include my ideas and comments in future planning efforts.

References:

Wilderness Management Plan - Yosemite National Park 1989

Keeping it wild 2: An updated interagency strategy to monitor trends in wilderness character across the National Wilderness Preservation System; Landress, Peter, et al, 2015; <http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/49721>

Correspondence ID: 11 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov.29,2015 20:43:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I believe the information that is given to backcountry users is the most valuable aspect of Park Service's program. I spend nearly everyday of the summer running the trails in Yosemite and meet these occasional groups (less than many people think) and they are very savvy. They understand the concepts of Leave No Trace which are reiterated by the permit stations. It's some of the people I see on the first mile or two (after that I see significantly less people) who seem ignorant of proper etiquette. How can these people be educated without posting more signs?

Also, I appreciate the trail crews who are creating more durable trails (great for stock) and repairing the historical damage.

I think the most effective programs are the kind that make doing the right thing easy. The free shuttle is a perfect example. I believe allowing people to park on the edge of the road where impact occurs and allowing a shuttle to pick them up is easy. Eliminating the shuttle would cause difficulties and increase road congestion.

Let's allow controlled impact where impact has occurred (roads and trails) and is likely to happen. Let's be wary of building new parking lots where impact is likely to radiate into areas of wilderness. Approximately 95% of the park is pristine wilderness, let's keep the development confined to the 5% that is already impacted.

It is difficult to balance recreation and impact but let's not try to solve the problem by eliminating access to this National Treasure.

Topic Question 2:

I believe the most important issue is access and recreational activities for all people. Recent plans have reduced the availability of recreational activities in the park to a minority. This park was put aside by President Lincoln, for "public use, resort, and recreation [and] shall be inalienable for all time." By reducing overnight backcountry use we eliminate that opportunity for savvy hikers, many who understand leave no trace etiquette. The reduction of bicycle rentals and rafting rentals while allowing private bikes and rafts caters to those visitors who have the means to bring their own equipment. That is not within all family's ability; whether due to mode of transportation, airplane or vehicle, or financial limitations, such as with rafts (e.i. buying a raft for one trip to Yosemite).

It is difficult enough these days to have an outdoor experience. How many times are parents saying, "Go out and play"? Let's not make it more difficult for this generation and those to come to find the joy that can be experienced in Yosemite's wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 12 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov.29,2015 21:49:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I like how it is accessible to anyone who wants to experience it. I think it is important that you make people get permits so they can become educated on leave no trace concepts and the rules of the backcountry. I think it is interesting you give only a certain amount of permits out considering I usually don't see that many people out there(I hike all over the backcountry frequently). The Yosemite wilderness is so special and beautiful that I wish more people could be able to see it, as long as they are taught how to behave and care for it. Maybe more public outreach on educating people?

Topic Question 2:

Eliminating stock and therefore closing high camps would severely limit the demographic of people that are able to experience the high camps. The high camps allow older people and less fit or wilderness experienced people to see the backcountry safely and appreciate the beauty of the Yosemite wilderness. The high camps are a historical part of Yosemite. They are also small hubs of information and help for people who may need help in the backcountry. I have personally witnessed the staff help all manner of dehydrated, food poisoned, lost people. In my opinion stock don't do an unreasonable amount of damage to the back country, a little hard on the trails but I am not too worried about that, just walk fifty feet off the trail and you are in pristine wilderness...a small price to pay. The national parks were set up for public use and recreation. We should keep them accessible for people to enjoy.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 13 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Nov,29,2015 22:13:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate how the park has been controlling the amount of people accessing the John Muir trail and pacific crest trail. I have seen a significant increase in the amount of people on these trails and their impact. I also appreciate the information that is given to backpackers to encourage a leave no trace mentality. I believe that keeping the recreational capacity of the areas is important and should not be discouraged. Yosemite was built upon the principles that through recreation and exposure we create conservationists that will continue to protect and conserve these areas for generations.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues for the wilderness is how the national park service responds to the threats of legal issues with certain clubs which wish to avert the park into directions of their own design. It is important to remember that the park was established to serve a purpose and that purpose should overrule any modern consideration of what a wilderness 'should be'. I strongly believe that keeping the Wild wild is an important role of any open space, but making sure that the public has the ability, and sometimes convenience, to access and experience these areas is tantamount. It is a delicate balance, but I believe this issue can be addressed through education and permission.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 14 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,30,2015 16:08:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

My wife, family and I have been visiting Yosemite for over 40 years taking annual vacations or just going up (we lived in southern California) for a long weekend. Our latest trip was a couple of years ago on a six day mule trip through the High Sierra Camps. That was one of the most memorable trips we have ever had and still encourage people to go on it. We are no longer of the age where we could have hiked the loop but the mules made it possible for us to see the beauty of Yosemite. We plan to do this at least one more time before we are physically unable to. The stock, the guides and camp staff made this trip possible. I would not change a thing!

Topic Question 2:

I think the most important issue is that there are groups that would like to restrict access to the backcountry to only a few in order to "protect" it. They are blind and don't see the reality that this is very little that can really harm the back country. A single "controlled" fire can do more damage in one hour than a hundred mules over a lifetime. By limiting who can go into the backcountry you will be limiting access to the park to a select few. The less people will then visit the park, which will mean the less financial recourses will be available to maintain the park and in the event of a natural event, like a wildfire, we could lose the park for generations.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 15 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,30,2015 19:52:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Answer 1: I believe the information that is given to backcountry users is the most valuable aspect of Park Service's program. I spend nearly everyday of the summer running the trails in Yosemite and meet these occasional groups (less than many people think) and they are very savvy. They understand the concepts of Leave No Trace which are reiterated by the permit stations. It's some of the people I see on the first mile or two (after that I see significantly less people) who seem ignorant of proper etiquette. How can these people be educated without posting more signs?

Also, I appreciate the trail crews who are creating more durable trails (great for stock) and repairing the historical damage.

I think the most effective programs are the kind that make doing the right thing easy. The free shuttle is a perfect example. I believe allowing people to park on the edge of the road where impact occurs and allowing a shuttle to pick them up is easy. Eliminating the shuttle would cause difficulties and increase road congestion.

Let's allow controlled impact where impact has occurred (roads and trails) and is likely to happen. Let's be wary of building new parking lots where impact is likely to radiate into areas of wilderness. Approximately 95% of the park is pristine wilderness, let's keep the development confined to the 5% that is already impacted.

It is difficult to balance recreation and impact but let's not try to solve the problem by eliminating access to this National Treasure.

Topic Question 2:

What are the most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness today and how should they be addressed?

Answer 2: I believe the most important issue is access and recreational activities for all people. Recent plans have reduced the availability of recreational activities in the park to a minority. This park was put aside by President Lincoln, for "public use, resort, and recreation [and] shall be inalienable for all time." By reducing overnight backcountry use we eliminate that opportunity for savvy hikers, many who understand leave no trace etiquette. The reduction of bicycle rentals and rafting rentals while allowing private bikes and rafts caters to those visitors who have the means to bring their own equipment. That is not within all family's ability; whether due to mode of transportation, airplane or vehicle, or financial limitations, such as with rafts (e.i. buying a raft for one trip to Yosemite).

It is difficult enough these days to have an outdoor experience. How many times are parents saying, "Go out and play"? Let's not make it more difficult for this generation and those to come to find the joy that can be experienced in Yosemite's wilderness.

Comments: The public scoping is certainly not unbiased. I feel that the questions are leading the public to give answers that will eliminate recreational opportunities in Yosemite (and therefore in other parks).

Correspondence ID: 16 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,30,2015 20:19:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

They aren't, the American public's land yet you are either shutting it down or paving it for parking. John Muir is rolling over in his grave on your behavior!!!! Horses impact the land less than humans do, and to reach some of the places these rides do, someone with a handicap can't hike or bike there

and the only way to do it without owning a horses is through businesses like the Yosemite Wranglers. They provide a service for all, but for those who can't hike the back country they are an important business, so to shut down Yosemite Wranglers is shutting down our public lands to a select few.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 17 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,30,2015 20:45:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am not convinced that the permit system is the best way to actually preserve the greatest amount of wilderness, but as a user, it is nice to have a limit on the number of people entering from any given trailhead.

Topic Question 2:

Most of the wilderness is well-managed, in that people do not go there. That is fine. There does need to be more stewardship of social climber trails. As more climbers use the Valley, efforts should be made to minimize their impact. The restoration area at Cathedral Peak is a great example of this. The final part of the approach to Eichorn Pinnacle, Conness West Ridge and North Ridge, Matthes Crest, Snake Dike, and possibly Starr King could all use some management. As a climber, it's nice to feel like I'm getting a "wilderness experience" in areas without established trails, but as a biologist, I know how illusory and harmful it is to have dozens of climbers all finding their own path to the same destination.

Comments: There should be more campsites in Yosemite Valley. There is no reason to keep such a tight limit the number of people who can camp in Yosemite. For many families, a camping trip to Yosemite is the highlight wilderness experience of their life. This should be available to as many people as possible. There is plenty of wilderness in Yosemite National Park, outside of the Valley, that few people visit. The Valley itself is a premier tourist destination, and managing it for the best visitor experience for the maximum number of people is more important than pretending that it reflects any kind of true wilderness.

If you want people to vote to fund the NPS in general, give them a great experience in Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 18 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,30,2015 21:21:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The bear cans for backpackers have helped reduce the number of bear hiker interactions. The quota system for backpackers is also working to make sure most areas are not overrun. Most features of your management plan are working.

Topic Question 2:

In my opinion, the stock use in the Yosemite backcountry needs to end for all recreational users. The stock use steel shoes and destroy the soft surfaces, so rounded rocks are added to the trails to increase durability, but the rocks end up being slick stones filled in with highly eroded dust. Horses and mules are vestiges of a bygone era. If this does not allow the High Sierra Camp Hotels well perhaps they should go as well. I do not see how for profit lodging is compatible with a wilderness ethic.

Comments: I have been enjoying the Yosemite Wilderness for over fifty years and have watched all the changes, while most of these changes have been positive. The wilderness ethic of leave no trace should eliminate the use of anything that causes permanent damage, this includes horses and the High Sierra Camps. In my experience horses cause more damage than mountain bikes and I agree that mountain bikes have no place in wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 19 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,30,2015 21:43:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the high camps are grandfathered into the Yosemite Wilderness. I believe it provides an awesome opportunity for the public who may lack the experience or confidence to backpack on their own to experience a part of Yosemite away from the incessant crowds of Yosemite Valley. I think there is enough acreage in the Yosemite Wilderness and the contiguous wilderness areas of the Sierra to support fifty miles of high camp connectivity while leaving plenty of other exceptional territory for more primitive recreation. I also appreciate the backpacker campgrounds in high volume areas. Again, this is an exception to wilderness principles in that one must give up solitude. However, the ecological damage would be extensive if folks were allowed to camp primitively in the really high traffic areas like Little Yosemite Valley, Sunrise, or Merced Lake. The West and California are growing rapidly and technological improvements are advancing, allowing more comforts in the backcountry, and social media and movies like Wild are glamorizing the backcountry. I think pragmatism in the highest use areas to protect the over resource is more important than choosing the wilderness ethic of solitude only to find that people are taking up their solitude right all over the place.

Topic Question 2:

Having travelled the Sierra fairly extensively for both work and fun, in Yosemite and outside it, I think backpackers are the biggest issue facing the ecological quality of the place. I regularly see folks camping in locations that are technically illegal, disrespectful to other users, and damaging to the place. I regularly cleaned up toilet paper in the Mammoth Lakes Basin from locations within 10 feet of Skelton and Barney Lakes where people defecated. The PCT and JMT are a veritable latrine by mid September. Last year at Vogelsang in late July, one party was camping on a meadow, another party was camping right next to a sign that said no camping, and no one was using the backpacker's campground. Either people clearly do not understand the rules, they do not understand why the rules matter, or they specifically choose to not follow the rules because they think they're more important than everyone else. I think that's what the park service needs to look at, particularly considering that there is very little agency presence once you leave the high camp loop. I'd love to say that having more rangers in the wilderness or volunteers providing outreach would do the trick, but clearly the NPS is hugely underfunded, and a volunteer without a badge or authority to ticket, really has little clout if a backpacker chooses not to follow etiquette. I think the essential question is, why aren't people following wilderness regulations and Leave No Trace? If its because of lack of knowledge, how do we educate them? If they know the etiquette but are choosing to still disregard the regulations, how do we get them to adhere to the regulations? Or do we just get rid of rules if the public does not want to follow them?

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 20 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,30,2015 21:50:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I grew up about a hour and a half away from Yosemite. I worked there for about 4 years total, in the time frame of about 7 years. Yosemite is my most favorite place. I still plan on returning and working there in my senior years. :) I am also an environmental activist.

About 2/3rds of the time I spent there was working at the stables. The Valley and Tuolumne. It breaks my heart that it is disappearing. One of the best things to you do to promote keeping our wilderness areas is providing access so people can go and experience it themselves. This allows people to really appreciate it and understand why it needs to be saved. Horses and mules with experienced guides are a great way for people to be able to go and experience the beauty of the park. This is especially the case for the many people that can't hike for various reasons. Maybe they have a disability. Maybe they just have no experience. I can't tell you how many people I had on my rides that fit this category. Thankfully, they were able to go out any way. Then they went home truly understanding. Yes, we have over loved Yosemite. Have you closed it off to people as well? No, what has been done is make the trails more distinct. Closed off some areas. And many other things. People access is still allowed. It seems to me that this should be the case for horses and mules as well. We shouldn't be blocking access to anyone. Yosemite is a National Park for the people. There are things that can be done to lessen the impact of horses. We are doing many things to lessen the impact of people, we are even still allowing rafting on the very rivers we are trying to save, why not for all the ways to access the park.

Correspondence ID: 21 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Nov,30,2015 22:49:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that there is some regulation. Overuse at some lakes is obvious. I like that there is some use of composting toilets in the Yosemite Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Fixed climbing anchors must be allowed to be placed as a traditional historical use of the Park. They protect climbers from a danger of death or serious physical injury. Retreats from high country climbs are real.

Being able to use a permit process to replace existing fixed anchors using motorized equipment, 1 for 1, is critically important. 20 plus year old time bomb quarter inch fixed anchors need to be updated before someone leans back and whips to the ground. Moto drills are a simple mechanism, like a chain saw, to make backcountry recreation less dangerous than it needs to be. Other National areas have permit processes for replacement using motorized equipment.

Comments: This feedback form is biased. It doesn't ask the converse of what we value about current management; that is, what don't we like about the management of the wilderness.

Being able to use a permit process to replace existing fixed anchors using motorized equipment, 1 for 1, is critically important. 20 plus year old time bomb quarter inch fixed anchors need to be updated before someone leans back and whips to the ground. Moto drills are a simple mechanism, like a chain saw, to make backcountry recreation less dangerous than it needs to be. Other National areas have permit processes for replacement using motorized equipment.

Correspondence ID: 22 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,01,2015 13:49:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I believe the trailhead quota system does help limit overuse in some areas of the wilderness. It does induce a level of planning on the user that is appropriate and needed.

Also, the focus on Leave-No-Trace, minimum impact travel and camping help set a minimum standard, and in many cases help educate park wilderness users.

A focus on safety in the backcountry, and the stress to be responsible for ones on safety is valuable.

The education of how to be in the wildness with bears, and in the front country as well.

Topic Question 2:

The one is overuse by human travel and camping. Much of the PCT/JMT is very overused. There is a stark delineation when traveling cross-county, where there is an absence of garbage, trampled fauna, and obvious human impact, and the rich, biologically diverse areas of the Yosemite backcountry. That said, I think it is important to encourage new pathways for park users to travel (off trail) cross-county, away from trails. This would most likely happen with commercial wilderness groups that teach and manage low impact and safe travel in the back country. Just to be clear, I am not advocating stock travel off trail in the bak country.

Perhaps providing backcountry permits that skirt around high-use permit entry areas into the park, by offering permits that follow routes via cross country travel within, say three miles, of the front country.??

Comments: I hope there is a new approach to mitigating the overuse of the trail systems in the park. I think a lot of good management has been instituted int he past 40 years, but there is an update that is needed.

Correspondence ID: 23 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,01,2015 13:50:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Their effort to ameliorate auto traffic. Their efforts to reduce noise pollution.

Topic Question 2:

Invasive species encroaching on the wilderness area.

Comments: Keeping wilderness "wild" has always been a challenge. But it must be met. Once the genie is out of the bottle, legal precedent is set and we

won't be able to put the genie back. I do believe some of the rules (no temporary use of chain saws to clear trails) are draconian, but then that's OK with me. Being a city boy, I consider wildernesses to be the last natural sanctuaries, or as close as we can come. That alone makes them valuable...sacred.

Correspondence ID: 24 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,01,2015 15:32:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I note that National Parks were created as a way to preserve the great wildernesses of our countries. As time passed by, National Parks have seen an increase in tourism as the population of the United States became more mobile with the advent of the automobile. As this has happened, parks have begun developing land for the use of tourists. These lands have included the construction of roads, trails, hotels, concessionaires, and many other facilities of the such. The National Park Service has done a good job of concentrating development in a few areas, thus mitigating the possible environmental damage on parks as a whole. I urge the park to however, put emphasis on controlling recreation that goes beyond these developed areas. Although the people should be able to enjoy the parks and their scenic beauty, it should be done in a way that is the least environmentally impactful. This new planning effort that will review management, administration, visitor, and commercial use should therefore plan out how lands should be utilized by visitors, which will be important in determining the direction of future plans. I suggest that the National Park Service start to move towards development plans that favor the environment and the species that live in these habitats rather than tourism whom it has already developed considerable land for.

Topic Question 2:

One of the many problems the National Parks such as Yosemite face are an excess of roads. I discourage the construction of more roads, and in fact encourage further decommissioning of roads. The funds that goes into creating these new roads could be diverted to maintenance of old roads. These roads provide an abundance of problems such as habitat fragmentation. I propose to develop other methods to allow visitors to access scenic areas in Yellowstone. Although trails are also environmentally impactful, the use of trails in place of roads in certain areas should be favored. Methods such as these not only have less impact on the environment, but they also encourage a development of values in nature. The average time spent in parks such as Yellowstone is around three hours now, showing how values in nature has lessened now that one can comfortably view the park while driving in an automobile. Trails will encourage visitors to spend time in the park and have less impact on the environment.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 25 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,01,2015 16:20:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The quota system, despite being occasionally frustrating, is the best foreseeable way to manage use in backcountry areas. However, for day-use in backcountry areas, it's often unclear to new users otherwise unfamiliar with the area that they're entering a "wilderness" area, despite the signage. Beyond the idea of "leave no trace" and backcountry safety, informing day-hikers of the type of area they're entering (the character of wilderness, and what that specifically entails) may be more effective. The signage at major trailheads in National Forests seems to accomplish this in the Sierras, in a way it seems trailhead signage in Californian National Parks do not.

More specifically, wilderness areas off-limits to camping (Upper/Lower Gaylor Lakes, for example) are an unfortunate but necessary restriction. Restricting camping in highly-impacted areas is important to maintain the wilderness quality of an area, even if it discourages use. Where sensitive habitats are easily accessible, as they are around Tioga Pass, it is vital that the National Park Service continue to protect these areas.

Topic Question 2:

Overuse. While the accessibility of wilderness areas largely remains unchanged, Yosemite's popularity both beneficial and detrimental. There must be a balance between use and overuse; seeing that new visitors gain an appreciation for wilderness areas, while simultaneously retaining the wilderness character of the areas that they visit. "Wilderness", beyond the Congressional definition of the word, is more than the physical location of some place. For a visitor to feel "wilderness", it's necessary to feel away from civilization; somewhere without crowds of people, somewhere quiet except for the sounds of the natural world, and somewhere that people might find just a little exhilaration in the fear of being "away". All of that is threatened by overuse. When you're reminded that you're still surrounded by people; whether that's from too much stock use on a trail, the loss of silence from the a "bustling" trail, or even signs of significant use in a campground, you're removed from that feeling of wilderness. While Yosemite in general is not in danger of losing actual designated wilderness area, it's the character of that wilderness that is under threat.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 26 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,01,2015 19:56:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the opportunity for the public to bring their own stock to ride and enjoy the back country trails. It is extremely important to me the horse camps remain at the same level currently enjoyed in the park. Ideally an addition of 2 or 3 sites at all three horse camps, Wawona, Bridal Veil and especially Tuolumne Meadows, would be ADDED.

Topic Question 2:

The "No Stock" attitude using the trails is extremely disturbing and WRONG! Who built the trails? Who maintains the trails? How is the back country protected during fires? Stock Users. That's who. And THAT is what needs to continue. There is no solid scientific base validating the "anti stock" users accusations of weed infestation, stream pollution, etc. is caused by stock users.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 27 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,02,2015 08:08:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
At least I get to comment on NPS management.

Topic Question 2:

How will the public be able to access the entire Park. What process will the public be allowed and not allowed to use in determining NPS's management decisions.

Comments: I was a packer for 25 years. Now I am retired but still want to ride my horse and pack my mule into the back country. Will I be able to do this?

Correspondence ID: 28 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,02,2015 11:02:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I am hoping you will reconsider not closing down the horse/mule rides in the park. I went as an AAA volunteer member this year to clean fire pits and hadn't realized this was going on. It's not a climb/haul that I would like to take with my trailer however would consider riding there. Please send me more information on how we can keep this opportunity open to the public.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 29 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,03,2015 01:30:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
We like when wilderness gets full protection from development or destructive acts of exploitation by greedy self promotional thieves. Wilderness must ALWAYS remain unspoiled forever!!!

Topic Question 2:

Comments: I have personally visited Yosemite more than 20 times in my life, the first at age 5. I have backpacked the park fully seeing all I could take in since it one of the most beautiful places on Earth! If you have not yet done so yourselves you MUST see it before you make Any changes to it. I have visited most of the parks in the western half of the USA. Exploring wilderness is a fantastic hobby that drives a very large tourism industry. A complete vast economic plan in it's own right.

Correspondence ID: 30 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,04,2015 15:30:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I'm extremely worried only people without disabilities will be able to experience the wilderness. I worked on trail crew back in 1981 the WORST offenders of respect to the wilderness trails were hikers healthy young hikers...I can no longer hike like a vase majority of people I am afraid that stock will be eliminated from the wilderness and therefore I will be discriminated against because I cannot hike and carry the weight of a back pack. That is what scares me.

Topic Question 2:

Limit the foot traffic and minimize the use through lottery permits.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 31 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,07,2015 05:55:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Providing access to wilderness areas of the park is important to me. My two high sierra camp experiences allowed me to experience the park in a different and more intense way than simply touring the valley. I hope that the park management continues to allow the maximum number of people access to this portion of the park while maintaining a sound policy to preserve the environment.

Topic Question 2:

A sound policy to manage fire threats and preserve the integrity of the Merced river.

Comments: My understanding is that there is an initiative underway to reduce the number of beds at at least two of the high sierra camps. I hope that a way is found to keep the number of beds intact. A wilderness experience is sorely lacking in the lives of most Americans. Continuing to reduce access further compromises an important part of our heritage.

Correspondence ID: 32 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,07,2015 15:45:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
We would increase the wonderful Park Rangers especially more interaction with the public .Every NPS Ranger and every HSC worker who has given a

public talk about Yosemite history, environment, geology , flora and fauna has been first rate . Continue such efforts and increase activity throughout the park

Consider more day hikes with volunteers to enjoy all of the trails of Yosemite
Such continued activities have been most appreciated for my countless visits to Yosemite

Topic Question 2:

Maintain the High Sierra Camps at the same level .. and with mules and Ranger lead excursions In fact offer more to public . My wife and I are stunned at how many people are grateful to know about such experience We understand costly and might not earn money - as it should be not a profit center. Mules and horses are not a major concern and are necessary for public enjoyment - just like trails and roads

Environmental concerns are important but I have always had wonderful experience hiking between HSC Last summer - 14 people had a great experience in my group lead by a great Ranger - the guided trip was unbelievable More trips not less trips More hikes and
Winter access is important for public too Cross country skiing or snow shoeing - gives the public more appreciation and enjoyment of Yosemite
I am confused as to why there is a recommendation to reduce tents in existing High SIERRA CAMPS It does not make sense

Comments: We are so lucky to have such a wonderful park and even with the incredible amount of public access More access and more public accommodation - not less should be encouraged

Rangers should be expanded and continue to be have lots of interaction with public .. Campfires talks hikes - summer star gazing .. lots more should be offered

Correspondence ID: 33 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,08,2015 19:03:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the park trying to keep a natural habitat.

Topic Question 2:

I see the big ones being addressed, like trash. And how it's picked up by volunteers and staff.

Comments: What I'm worried about is the park service becoming over protective that they limit park access soo bad that no one can get in. Many of the beds in the camps and the campgrounds have been eliminated. We [my wife and I] now often times can't get a spot on the trail if we want to stay in the camps. We aren't like younger people who can rough it on there own. So some years we have to go without a trip in. I see no reason for this. The trails even though they are 100 years old, are almost never more than a foot wide. That is almost no environmental impact. Don't get so over protective that America is forced to stay away. It is through living the experience that people really get to appreciate the splendor this country has to offer. And thereby retaining the desire to have it preserved.

Correspondence ID: 34 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,09,2015 07:37:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the ability to enjoy the remote areas of the park. If not for a ranger-led hike to a high sierra camp I would not return to the park. By making the backcountry accessible I'm able to avoid crowded tourist areas. I don't mind that these options are only available by lottery. I don't mind the price. But I don't want to loose the opportunity to experience the awesomeness in a quiet way with a person who can teach me about what I'm seeing.

Topic Question 2:

I think car traffic should be restricted in the valley. Public transportation is good but will need a capacity analysis if cars are forced to park at the entrances. See Zion's policy.

People do stupid things. Sometimes it's because they don't know any better. Educating how to be bear aware, the dangers, respecting the water source, etc. before allowing people in the park. Maybe use the buses as an education vehicle. A video on the bus in multiple languages. First stop is visitor's center. I know this eliminates 'car camping' by placing all cars in one area but every site has a bear box and people will think smarter about making trash at sites.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 35 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,09,2015 17:48:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Trails are usually well maintained with good signage (although the mileages don't always add up).

I like having backpacker camping in all campgrounds for the night prior and after the trip. That is very helpful for people traveling from further away.

Requiring the use of a bucket or similar device when getting water from a water source in the backcountry (as opposed to pumping straight from a lake or creek). It prevents erosion and is actually convenient (we always do it even in parts of the Sierra where it is not required after having to do it in Yosemite (and grumbling about it prior to the trip)).

Having camped in Tuolumne Meadows for a week every summer for almost ten years, I think Yosemite is doing a great job managing bears. The first couple of years we'd pretty much see a bear or hear "go away bear" at least once a day. The last couple of years we haven't seen or heard a bear at all.

Topic Question 2:

Continuing popularity of some hikes like the JMT or Half Dome leading to people attempting those who are not prepared and do not understand what they get themselves into. I think requiring one person per group to be certified in Wilderness First Aid would help as would a system requiring people to show

they have some relevant experience before attempting the "famous" hikes/backpacking trips, e.g. requiring people who apply for a JMT permit to have done at least one five-day or 50 mile backpacking tour in the Sierra in the last 2 years.

Drought/climate change/air pollution killing trees. For this more research into causes and remedy is needed.

Comments: As trailhead quota often fill up quickly with groups booking a significant number and later canceling, some type of waiting list would make it more convenient for people who don't get their desired permit right away. Instead of having to frequently check if permits have become available due to cancellations, people on the waiting list would get notified of availability and have a certain time period to either get or decline the permit (if declined, goes to the next person on the waiting list).

In general a unified permit process for the whole Sierra Nevada (Yosemite, SEKI, National Forests) would be desirable (and all online, please). Also, if a reserved permit could be picked up not just from one specific ranger station/wilderness office but any within the Sierra (or at least any within Yosemite) that could be helpful for people depending on what they do prior to their backpacking tour. It would also be helpful for some people if permits could be picked up more than a day in advance (at least two or three; I'm not talking weeks).

I think the High Sierra Camps are a good idea and should be kept as not everyone has the ability or courage to backpack. However I think the comfort level should be decreased a bit to make it closer to backpacking, e.g. no showers and no flush toilets which would reduce their water use. I would also like to see a change in their reservation system which currently gives preference to last year's visitors making it almost impossible for first-time users to get in. Having trekked in the European Alps where many refuges get supplied by helicopter, I am wondering if that might not be a good alternative for the High Sierra Camps as well instead of mule treks. Yes, it's noisier, but it's also over much more quickly and doesn't leave any traces on the trail.

I think guided backpacking tours (either by outside providers or run by the NPS) should be available as not everyone is comfortable backpacking without an experienced backpacker and not everyone has one willing to accompany them among their friends. The same goes for stock use for people who would otherwise not be able to enjoy the backcountry as long as it stays within reasonable levels.

In general I am not a big fan of centralized backpacking campsites in the backcountry. You don't really get the wilderness experience if you are camping with 20 or more other people. Also in my experience, backpackers tend to follow leave-no-trace more conscientious in isolated sites than in larger ones (where the misdeeds of former (or current) occupants are often more visible and lead people to develop an "if the others don't do leave-no-trace, I don't have to, either"-attitude. In Yosemite we have so far avoided those areas but we have clearly observed this behavior in SEKI NP.

A map showing all established backcountry campsites and fire rings would be helpful. For larger campsites the number of tents they can accommodate would be useful. That would help when planning a trip as it allows one to easily see if there are stretches of trail with no or very limited campsites available allowing to plan days accordingly. It would also allow backpackers to report illegal fire rings (as they know they are illegal).

I think requiring backpackers to carry some type of bear-proof containers helps keeping the bears wild. It might be useful to supplement bear lockers at some larger backpacking campsites in particular those that are within a day of high-use trailheads. That way the not uncommon "fist night can't get everything in the canister"-overflow can be stored bear-safe.

Correspondence ID: 36 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,09,2015 23:52:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the existence the Yosemite High Sierra Camps. It is very important to preserve them and to preserve the option of the High Sierra Loop Trips because they provide access to the high country for people who are not strong enough to visit the high country using backpacks.

My wife and I have had many wonderful backpacking trips together in Yosemite over the past 39 years together, but the Yosemite High Sierra Camps have also played a very important role in our access to Yosemite.

I have participated in two six- or seven-day long ranger-led loop trips staying at the Yosemite High Sierra Camps.

The first was with a family group of seven: my wife and I, two of our kids, and my sister and her two kids. It would not have been possible for this group to have used backpacks and make a trip of this scope and duration, but because of the High Sierra Camps, we were able to do this wonderful loop trip and expose our kids to the Yosemite high country and initiate a love of wilderness that persists in them to this day.

The second loop trip was more recently with a group of older people who would not have been able to make the trip using backpacks. The High Sierra Camps again make it possible for people without the physical stamina for carrying heavy backpacks to experience the high country in its full glory.

My most memorable High Sierra Camp experience was the week my wife and I spent together revisiting the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp after my wife was no longer able to backpack. Hiking up to Vogelsang with a day pack was at the limit of her endurance, even after acclimating at Tuolumne Meadows. We did a different day hike every day while we were at Vogelsang and it was wonderful to have one final shared high country experience made possible by the High Sierra Camps.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 37 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,10,2015 11:23:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am concerned about plans to reduce the number of beds in the High Sierra Camps. Reducing Merced Lake by 18 beds is probably OK as it is very large. But reducing Glen Aulin by 4 beds may adversely affect the High Sierra Loop trip which is a highly successful trip which I have enjoyed in the past.

Correspondence ID: 38 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,12,2015 21:43:43

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
See additional comments

Topic Question 2:
See additional comments

Comments: I am writing to voice my request for Yosemite National Park to remove its ban of non-motorized watercraft use in wilderness streams/rivers. As a local whitewater kayaker, I can attest to the world class quality of whitewater creeks in Yosemite. Kayaking/rafting of backcountry streams provides a unique wilderness experience that is low environment impact and does not endanger other park visitors. Kayaking/rafting is allowed in wilderness areas of other national parks including Sequoia/Kings. Whitewater kayakers and rafters have shown a long history of being a responsible user group and would continue to do so in Yosemite.

I also applaud the Yosemite Park Service for the recent approval of non-motorized watercraft on the Merced, Tuolumne and South Merced Rivers.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 39 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,13,2015 17:31:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the landscape of the park, its the quietness and the solitude you get here unlike when your in Yosemite Valley, Glacier Point etc. where there are crowds of people. I think trailhead quotas need to be reduced to enter wilderness and even in some areas issue permits for day hikes at a fee of course as long as the money you spend for a permit stays in the park

Topic Question 2:
Overcrowding/Overuse. Issue permits for day and overnight use at a fee. Issue packout waste kits through out the parks wilderness

Comments: Thanks for letting me comment, I cherish this park so much and I'm glad to give my opinion. First thing first: The five High Sierra Camps located in the wilderness needs to all be shut down the buildings taken down and the area's restored to natural conditions. There shouldn't be luxury in wilderness, its all about roughing it. I also am concerned about low level flights from both military and citizen aircraft, this is a problem especially around Half Dome but I'm sure its wilderness wide and needs to be within the scope of this plan. Campfires: Campfires need to be prohibited wilderness wide in national parks and allowed only in the frontcountry at designated campgrounds. Half Dome: As much as I love climbing Half Dome via the cables I think the cables need to be taken down for good, this area is getting overused and there is trash strewn around the Half Dome Trail and the base of Half Dome. I even saw water bottles falling out of peoples packs and rolling down the dome to the bottom, and not to mention people leaving food scraps on the summit!! Eliminate the cables if people are not going to respect the landscape!! Structures in wilderness: I mentioned High Sierras Camps earlier but I would like to see all structures with the exception of ranger cabins eliminated and the area's restored to natural conditions, with structures in wilderness it spoils wilderness character and there are always sanitation problems, this includes privies and backcountry restrooms. Bearboxes: I dont know how many bearboxes there are in wilderness but I think some of them need to be removed and people need to rely on carrying bear canisters. If there are any drift fences in wilderness I think they ALL should be removed. Eliminate recreational stock use in the parks if there is any and no stock whatsoever should be allowed off trail.

Thanks again I'm looking forward to reading the updated WSP

Correspondence ID: 40 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,16,2015 09:01:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

THat the parks wilderness areas remain a jewel in the system. I very much value that the NPS opened the wild and scenic Tuolumne and Merced to paddlers in the past year.

Topic Question 2:
The NPS needs to figure out how to best allow other forms of recreation that are compatible with wilderness in the park. I believe this includes looking at whether there are trails suitable for use by mountain bikes as well as opening the rest of the parks rivers to paddlers in non motorized rafts, kayaks and canoes. Rivers are trails, and boats are backpacks.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 41 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,16,2015 18:46:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

On two occasions, members of my family and I have been fortunate to have been able to spend seven days hiking the Sierra Loop Camps with USFS Rangers. We were able to see parts of the park that we never would have otherwise visited, and thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated the quality of the ranger guiding. I find it very distressing that the existence of these camps is threatened. There is no question that humans are impacting the wilderness, but I firmly believe the benefit is worth the impact. The fellow campers I met were all concerned about the environment and were good stewards - no trash, no off trail hiking, no feeding animals, not to mention no motor vehicles. All of us respectfully enjoyed the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:
Over crowding, too many motor vehicles.
Require reservations.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 42 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,16,2015 20:45:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I love that the numbers of people are limited to hiking in the High Sierras. I especially love that you give opportunity to hike such beautiful wilderness with the controlled numbers. I have had the wonderful chance to hike the High Sierras, and we had the most wonderful guide. It was an experience of a lifetime and has give our family a love of the wilderness. After hiking in Yosemite we have made a major hike for 9 subsequent summers all over the US. Yosemite was one of our most favorite. I would love to someday return. I would hate to think that wouldn't be possible

Topic Question 2:

I would think government funds to maintain the wilderness would be one of the most important issues. I worry that the parks have been used as political purposes as the current administration has threatened to close parks and limit funds. I'm not sure how that should be addressed, but we should all be concerned and informed about the loss of interest politicians have for the parks.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 43 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,17,2015 11:11:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

For people who are either not able or not interested in a rigorous, challenging and possibly food deprived excursion into the wilderness, the High Sierra Camps provide a decent meal, a bed off the ground and usually a shower and a place to poop. This is invaluable to those of us who are past our prime but still want to engage in the beautiful, serene wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Global warming/climate change is the biggest issue and only educating people will help resolve it. My experience on the trails around and to the High Sierra Camps is that most people using them pick up after themselves and others if someone happens to drop something unintentionally. It is vastly different from behavior in Yosemite Valley. If pack train poop is such a big deal (I'll admit it can be challenging on a hot day) maybe some pack train trails could be developed?

Comments: I doubt that my story is unique but I think it is reasonable to assume that many people would miss out on the High Sierra if it weren't for the camps. I'm a fossil and I don't remember even driving though Tioga Pass as a child. My family (mom, dad and me - and usually one of my friends) camped in Yosemite yearly back in the day when the firefall was active. The last hike I remember was with my dad up the Mist Trail. I was probably 9 or 10 and it was a wet spring. My dad got most of our camping gear from the surplus stores. I was outfitted with an army green poncho that was WAY too big but was supposed to keep me dry. Well, I slipped and slid and banged my knees all the way up the cold, wet, slippery rocks. I'm sure I was as big a pain in the neck to my very fit and agile dad as his pace and choice of rain gear was to me. As a result, the next Yosemite hike I remember was in 1995 when my friend and I stayed in the valley and hiked the Mist Trail. It was WONDERFUL! We then applied for the 4 and 7 day guided hikes, hoping to be selected for one. I was 50 when I took my first hike in the High Sierra - it was the 7 day Loop Hike and I took a zillion pictures and still enjoy them. We leave the guys at home and us girls (or "old dears" as my friend from England refers to us) do our best to get to Tuolumne Meadows every year for a few days and as much hiking as we can get in. We've done the 4 and 7 day hikes a couple of times - since I can get lost in Macy's I'd rather have a Ranger to keep me pointed in the right direction! Everyone should have the chance to experience the solitude, the olfactory joy, the visual extravaganza and the spiritual satisfaction that is the High Sierra of Yosemite. Not having the camps would take that pleasurable opportunity away from anyone unable to carry a backpack...I don't think that's what Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir had in mind.

Correspondence ID: 44 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,17,2015 12:00:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I feel the way the NPS presently manages the Yosemite wilderness is adequate. With the park having over 700,000 plus acres, there are adequate acres designated as truly "wilderness".

Topic Question 2:

I strongly oppose designating the High Sierra Camp loops as wilderness. My wife and I hiked the High Sierra loop in 2009 and had our best vacation ever. The experience was one in a million and the Ranger/Naturalist made the experience even better. Pls. keep the High Sierra Camps as they allowing people to explore the beauty of Yosemite. I hope to experience the camps again in their present format. Hiking and camping on my own will not happen. Thank you for your consideration keeping the High Sierra Camps for us to enjoy.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 45 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,18,2015 11:01:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Providing a variety of options to experience the park, while limiting the impact of the tremendous use of it

Topic Question 2:

Balancing the ways in which citizens can experience the Park with the need to protect the environment and resources. It is a "Park" after all.

Comments: I would like to support continuation of the High Sierra Camps in any plans for the Park future. They are such a historic part of the Park, and by

their continued existence and usage remind us of the foresight and effort made to establish the parks long ago. Also, the Camps offer a chance to experience the Park to many who could not otherwise do so. My wife and I are now in our 70's and we were able to have a wonderful ranger led hike to 3 of the camps. I am afraid our backpacking days are behind us, and we would not have been able to travel through this much of the park without the camps. (I have visited Yosemite since I learned to ski at Badger Pass in the 1950's.)

While I enthusiastically support the wilderness ethic, I think the mission of the Parks needs to include more and more varied usage than wilderness areas should. Thank you for your efforts to balance and protect these treasures.

Correspondence ID: 46 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,18,2015 12:40:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Keeping it for backcountry use only.

Topic Question 2:
Population pressure.

Comments: I am writing to you specifically as a horse owner who has taken my own horses into the backcountry of Yosemite for my personal use and pleasure. This has been a delightful time in my life, adding immense enjoyment, not only because the horses make it possible to bring my older mother along but also simply because spending time with the horses full-time outdoors in the wilderness adds an element to our relationship that cannot be replicated. We are a real team and I feel connected to nature, wind, rain, the sun and the moon more strongly because of the horses. I can understand that there may need to be restrictions on large life groups of livestock but I want to encourage ongoing responsible use of livestock on a personal level if nothing else.

Correspondence ID: 47 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,18,2015 17:10:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Yosemite National Park is one of my favorite places on the planet. Keeping it from being destroyed by over use is important. Making it available to visitors is also important. Too many visitors will destroy it. But it must also be accessible. Limiting the number of people allowed into any specific area may be required. Better public transit is also essential to reduce the number of vehicles.

Topic Question 2:
I am very concerned about the possible closure of the High Sierra camps. In 2004 my wife and I did a 7-day High Sierra Camp loop. It was a life changing experience. The camps make the high Sierra area accessible to individuals who can't hike with a full pack, but eliminate the need for pack animals. There is a limit to the number of people who can use the camps, so the environmental impact is negligible. People who use the camps are likely to become advocates and supporters of Yosemite. The camps have become a wonderful tradition which needs to continue.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 48 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,19,2015 12:36:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The park is managed like it should be...in a manner that it is owned by the people. We treasure our freedom to find the heart of our countries most beautiful wilderness and get to enjoy the best of the United States. Most importantly to myself and thousands of others is the opportunity to take our horses into the wilderness and camp as our ancestors have for hundreds of years. The preservation of that use is of the utmost importance to me and many others.

Topic Question 2:
The threat to restrict the public's use and access of our own land...we preserved it just for the purpose of enjoying it for what it is and in the manner described above. Let's not forget that purpose, who it serves and belongs to.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 49 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,19,2015 16:44:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that off-trail travel is allowed for hikers. I value that rock climbing and reaching a mountain summit does not require special permission. I feel both of these things create a sense of freedom that is very powerful and, well, freeing to the mind. To know you can look at place from a distance or on a map, and the only inhibition will be your own physical ability, this fosters an unconstrained mindset that is hard to find elsewhere in American society. The idea that any area of the park can be accessed if you have the volition is a very powerful thing. Requiring permits for overnight camping is good, because the demand is much larger and the impact greater, so while I wish it were not necessary, I value this regulation. I don't feel that the impacts from climbers are nearly as great, and currently the community is very self-regulating. Hopefully the sport's popularity does not grow to a point where permitting becomes necessary.

Topic Question 2:
I feel that pack travel with stock animals is an unnecessary stress on the wilderness environment. As a hiker, the impact is very apparent. Trails trampled to dust, trailside vegetation munched by the pack animals, large amounts of animal waste that pollutes trails, streams, rivers, and bodies of water. I bury my bodily waste in a hole, why is a pack animal's waste allowed to just sit on the trail and run off into the water? Surely there is an ecological impact from this. I see many rocks and stone steps polished by horseshoes. It allows people to reach depths of the back country that may not be physically possible for them otherwise, and allows them to bring a lot more stuff, which means the potential for higher level of impact.

Comments: I strongly feel that guided touring and hiking through the park is important for protection of wilderness. I believe in this so strongly that I have chosen to make this my career, but I am commenting on this separately because I want to acknowledge what could be seen as a personal bias or conflict of interest. A guest to the park experiencing Yosemite along with a naturalist guide will take more from their park experience than the average person who goes out on their own. They see the park through the eyes of someone who has chosen to be a steward of the area.

I have guided many a groups where a member attempted to litter food and/or paper waste, not maliciously, but because they thought leaving behind something biodegradable was a none-issue, but after being explained that it is something unnatural to the environment and thus can be harmful to it, they saw this act in a new light. Being able to teach children these leave-no-trace ethics, as well as deepen their appreciation for nature, is so powerful in protecting the park for future generations by the next generation. This is one of many examples of how exploring Yosemite with someone who cares so much for it, can positively impact the park for years to come.

Correspondence ID: 50 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,20,2015 13:17:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

They are able to balance public access to their budget. They need to make sure that public access isn't limited or managed in a way where one groups access is sacrificed for another by using bad science or information that is not true to the whole.

Topic Question 2:

How people get to the park and the numbers. When you limit stock people become more concentrated to the places they can get to. Being able to get places where the stock is the only way to get there takes many people from being able to experience. the Park.

Comments: I have been packing in for more than 25 years. I have shared the parks with my children and now their children. The parks are about the experiece and sharing it with the future. I hope that our parks don't manage the people out.

Correspondence ID: 51 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,20,2015 15:22:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Allows wilderness experiece to a wide variety of physical abilities (or disabilities) for those who otherwise might not be able to access the park.

Having guided hikes provides a much deeper level of understanding in nature, park stewardship.

Comments: I had the pleasure of participating in a group hike 5 years ago in the High Sierra Camps. My group of 8 women (ages 55) spent 6 days hiking along with a fantastic guide (Adrianna Hirtler). We still share stories of our experiece.

Without the tent cabins / meals provided, none of us would have been able to participate. Having those amenities allowed us to feel we were experiecing true wilderness at an age when none of us are able to carry full backpacks. The difference of carrying 20 pounds vs 40 pounds with bedding and food, made this experiece possible.

Seeing the park with an experieced guide provided a level of understanding of park stewardship, balance of nature we never would have gained on our own.

Correspondence ID: 52 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,20,2015 16:33:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the High Sierra Camps. The historical significance of the camps needs to be remembered and respected. Many people that would otherwise not be able to appreciate the Yosemite back-country are able to because of these accommodations. The National Park belongs to all of us and it is important to make remote areas of the park accessible to those that wish to visit. I wish that other National Parks had similar accommodation options. The High Sierra camps are well managed and interaction with the camp staff and the Ranger interpretive staff encourages conservation and protection of the Yosemite wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 53 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,20,2015 19:00:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I love the accessibility for people of all ages and abilities. I backpacked when I was younger and continue to day hike when I visit Yosemite. But I can't carry a full pack any longer. I was thrilled to visit the backcountry again by traveling between the High Sierra camps. I hope to go again in 2017 and I hope they continue to be available for decades to come. Thank you.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 54 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,20,2015 23:21:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Making the park accessible to a wide variety of users. For example, the High Sierra Camps offer a way for people not capable of carrying many days worth of food and gear with them to enjoy even the more remote parts of Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

1. Overcrowding and traffic in the Valley, and
2. the near impossibility to get a reservation to hike all the High Sierra Camps in one trip.

Comments: Please do not reduce or eliminate the current services available at the High Sierra Camps. By doing so you would make the Yosemite experience - for many older and less physically capable - park users limited to the Valley alone.

Correspondence ID: 55 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,21,2015 11:55:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I understand that one of the issues that the NPS will be considering is the extent of commercial services in wilderness areas, such as commercial guided tours. Has the NPS considered providing these kind of guided tours themselves?

Correspondence ID: 56 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,21,2015 16:07:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It is important to maintain the current level of stock use of trails, camping and high sierra access. The High Sierra Camps make it possible for all citizens, regardless of age or disability, to visit the back country without bringing tent, bag, food and cookware. It's an incredible opportunity that ought to remain available to all of us.

Topic Question 2:

Ensuring historical uses by stock users and equestrians remains available and is not limited in the future plans.

Comments: Riding and packing stock animals has a long history and strong cultural legacy in the Sierra Nevada. Stock was used for early pioneer expeditions, the support of sheep and cattle grazing, U.S. Calvary Patrols, and Sierra Club expeditions. Using stock is an acceptable non-mechanized and primitive method of traveling in the wilderness and wilderness visitors use horses, mules, llamas and burros to assist them in their explorations along the park's trails. It is essential to maintain access to Yosemite experiences by equestrians and stock users.

Correspondence ID: 57 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,22,2015 11:22:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have been to Yosemite at least 20 times from 1957 until I took my fourth High Sierra Loop Seven Day trek with Ranger Dick Ewart in July of 2014. My first trip was in 1964 with Professor/Naturalist/Ranger Carl Sharsmith. As I understand it, Yosemite is unique in this opportunity to visit the wilderness and that sadly 95% plus visitors only see the Valley and the Mariposa Grove. I think the National Park Service is doing a fine job but I do not want to see a reduction of facilities at Merced Lke and Glen Aulin campsites. This will only reduce the backcountry experience. Please do not let this happen and please justify why you want to reduce this capability.

Comments: I would love to see the Park Service in Yosemite expand the wilderness experience by leading excursions into the northern part of the Park. This vast and unexplored area to visitors must be a treasure trove of adventure and it would be delightful to backpack with a professional to explore this primitive area.

Correspondence ID: 58 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,22,2015 13:32:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I believe the High Sierra Camps and the guided trips offered by the NPS are invaluable toward helping people see the value of the wilderness areas of the Park. It inspires reverence for the wild, and develops a long lasting commitment to conservation. Please do not remove these valuable elements (in spite of the fact that they are "man-made") from the wilderness experience.

Topic Question 2:

Certainly too much foot traffic will jeopardize the wilderness and should continue to be highly controlled by the NPS. I believe the permitting process and the controlled "Wilderness Loop" trips are excellent ways of managing the frequency and impact of visitations to the wilderness areas. I believe any range grazing permits should be carefully managed and gradually curtailed as the grandfather agreements expire.

Comments: Clearly the Yosemite Wilderness area is a treasure that must be guarded in the spirit of John Muir...keep it as pristine and special as it "was in the beginning." If you have to charge more to visit....feel free!

Correspondence ID: 59 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,22,2015 17:03:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am very disappointed that comments made by the public are made completely invisible to the public during the "public scoping" process. This prevents any dialogue among the public about ideas, new or old, that are presented. What is the National Park Service afraid of?

Correspondence ID: 60 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,23,2015 12:53:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I highly value the High Sierra Camp experience. I have been privileged to visit there a few times and I think it is a great way to enjoy the wilderness and to educate the public about the value of the wilderness, and our need to protect it. Without the HSC's, only backpackers will be able to enjoy the High Sierra. This is a very thin slice of our society. I think we should keep the HSC's and work to reduce their impact as needed.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 61 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,23,2015 15:37:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Managing resources in order to maintain the beauty while allowing reasonable safe access.

Topic Question 2:

It is urgent that horseback users be given equal safe access and are not outvoted by more vocal users, such as mountain bikers who often are out for thrills and do not respect use by others, especially horseback users.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 62 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,23,2015 18:31:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Accessibility - but managed
Ranger tours to educate all

Topic Question 2:

As I reflect back on the numerous wilderness hikes and camping experiences I have no "If only...." moments that I can think of. Trails are well maintained, HSC are accessible - though patience is needed if one does not get in using the lottery, HSC counselors are great, the vistas are super - albeit the smoke/smog looking back to the valley is at times horrible. Not much you can do about forest fires.....

Ah so an issue would be how to improve the air quality....reduce vehicle traffic/no or very limited camp fires in the valley (fires on even or odd days only maybe

Comments: The HSCs are a must do for anyone who enjoys the outdoors and the hiking experience of going from camp to camp. A real treasure that should be preserved!!

Correspondence ID: 63 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,24,2015 15:23:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The resources that the park provides with the rangers is great. Someone to go to with a question or problem helps with the stress of being out of a normal environment for the most of us visiting the park

Topic Question 2:

Allowing the maximum amount of people to be able to visit the parks wilderness without restricting access. If lowering the impact is needed then restriction of the pack animals should occur since they destroy a trail quickly and don't practice leave no trace principles.

Comments: My park service should be doing everything it can to encourage me to get out into the wilderness to experience the wonder of the natural treasures we have here in this country.

Correspondence ID: 64 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,25,2015 16:06:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It allows for a special time in a safe and wilderness environment. The high Sierra camps are most important to take care of so that generations can have the time to explore and appreciate nature.

Topic Question 2:

We need to maintain these camps for future generations. This is valuable to learn to care for our earth.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 65 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,26,2015 10:32:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

do not believe current management is protecting bison and bears as they should be. believe the management is anti wildlife and sees it only as live targets to be shot to death. we don't want bison to be slaughtered. i am well aware of the horror of your slaughtering bison. bison are part of americans heritage and

need protection and preservation, as do the bears and other wildlife species that need yellowstone as a place to stay alive. that site is extremely important to me as a site for the wildlife. keep the humans out. ban all atvs and snowmobiles and human gas pollution and danger to themselves and wildlife from their us.

Topic Question 2:

ban more people who destroy and harm the place.. stupid people who do not respect bears should not be allowed in their park. Protect the bison., don't let people in the park that are stupid about bear or animal behavior. i have seen pictures of stupid people who create incidents with animals at this park. Fine those people or keep them out. they are troublemakers.

Comments: i sngt b ison fully protected from slaughter. i want the park extended so that if the bison go a few feet out they are not immediately seized and slaughtered. i want bears protected, all kinds of bears. i want all wildlife species protected. smaller numbers of people need to be allowed in and no stupid ones who look to agitate animals should ever be allowed in. if they don't know how to observe, keep them out. if they do cause problems, fine the errant criminal acts of people and fine them high like thousands of dollars. no animals should suffer from the stupidity and antipathy of people. keep snowmobiles and atvs completely out of this park. Cut the number of people allowed in. preserve and protect is what should happen., preserve and protect. no logging. no prescribed burning. No application of toxic glyphosate or other chemicals.

Correspondence ID: 66 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,27,2015 20:50:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I much appreciate the fact that Wilderness permits are free and that one does not need to stick to a strict itinerary. This allows for one's wilderness experience to unfold more naturally, in the spirit of the wilderness itself, if one chooses. In a similar vein, I appreciate that in most areas backpackers are not required to stay in designated campgrounds. I also appreciate that Wilderness use is limited so that many backcountry areas are generally not overcrowded and that this is done in a way (trailhead quota system) that always leaves options open for someone willing to try hiking in a less popular area, even on the busiest of days. I also appreciate that such a unique, historic system as the High Sierra Camps has been allowed to remain within the boundaries of designated Wilderness. While operating the camps does violate many valuable Wilderness restrictions, excluding these specific areas from the surrounding Wilderness in order to allow them to continue to exist provides a unique opportunity for people who might not be able to or might not otherwise push themselves to hike so far or for so long into the Wilderness on their own. Many of these people become some of the strongest Wilderness advocates after their experiences hiking the High Sierra loop.

Topic Question 2:

It seems to me that one of the most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness today is unregulated use/inappropriate behavior by Wilderness users in certain areas. The backpacker campgrounds at Sunrise High Sierra Camp and Vogelsang High Sierra Camp are examples of this. At Sunrise, the well-travelled High Sierra Loop trail disintegrates into a maze of social trails when one hikes into the backpackers' campground from Tenaya Lake. Then it is very unclear where the campground begins and ends so that campers wind up spreading out from what I used to think to be the campground and impacting new areas that others then think are part of the campground. Vogelsang Backpackers' campground is also difficult for backpackers to locate and people are often camped too close to the lake and/or on fragile meadow vegetation. It seems like better signage and a more structured setup for the campgrounds could help both of these areas.

Comments: I cherish Yosemite Wilderness as a place to experience the other-than-human Sierra Nevada in the most magical of settings. I have worked as a ranger naturalist in Yosemite for 12 seasons and led High Sierra Camp loop trips during 8 of those seasons. As powerful as front country Yosemite is in all of its world-renown grandeur at inspiring human beings, I find it amazing how potently Yosemite Wilderness infects most who find their way out on Yosemite's trails on overnight excursions. I LOVE that Yosemite Wilderness is so accessible (and access is free) to anyone who has the time and follows the simple procedures for getting a Wilderness Permit because I think that these experiences influence our culture for the better in deep ways.

In a similar vein, i also LOVE that the High Sierra Camps, an innovative idea of the first director of the National Park Service (Stephen T. Mather), have been "grandfathered in" as Yosemite Wilderness was designated around them. These camps lure all sorts of people out further from the roads than they might normally venture, including some very powerful people who often become some of Wilderness's strongest advocates. Many of these people have been influenced by their Wilderness experiences in ways that in turn have influence on the world.

In my own experiences leading 5 and 7 day High Sierra Camp loop trips over 8 seasons, I've seen the influence of the High Sierra Camps first-hand. I once learned at the end of a trip that 2 people on my trip (a couple) were real estate developers. Soon after the trip, they informed me that they decided to make all of their future developments LEED certified (a strict certification system for buildings built with sustainability in mind) inspired by their experiences of the Yosemite Wilderness hiking the High Sierra Loop. They would not have taken the trip if the High Sierra Camps did not exist, though they have since pursued more rustic Wilderness travel on their own (also inspired by their High Sierra Camp experiences). This is just one story of many that make me feel so strongly that the High Sierra Camps are essential to the magical whole that is the Yosemite Wilderness and that is Yosemite.

While I recognize that there are many challenges you must think about in trying to protect the integrity of Yosemite Wilderness for the future through the Wilderness Stewardship Plan, I sincerely hope that in your planning efforts you will protect these two essential values of Yosemite Wilderness:

1. Free, simple and minimally-restricted access through an easy to use Wilderness permit system
2. The cultural treasures of the High Sierra Camps which lure people out of privileged daily routines to experience the Yosemite Wilderness in ways that affect them and the decisions they make in the world for a lifetime

Correspondence ID: 67 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,28,2015 11:18:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I deeply value that, for the most part, wilderness areas are managed with the assets that make them "wild" as the first priority for preservation. Restrictions with regard to number of travelers per areas and how they use the areas are both critical to maintaining the "wild" in wilderness. I appreciate that the NPS takes its responsibility as stewards of this land very seriously so that we and future generations can enjoy them, but that at the same time the NPS makes it possible for lovers of the outdoors to responsibly go out and explore.

Topic Question 2:

There is a great increased interest in visiting wilderness areas, and while in an of itself this is a good thing, there is great potential for harm to wilderness areas as a result. My personal experience has shown me that HOW people engage with their surroundings in the wilderness is a more telling factor than HOW MANY do. For most wilderness areas, numbers are not the main issue. It is possible for many people to enjoy nature with respect and minimal impact. However, in my experience it's crucial to focus on fostering respect and responsibility in stewardship of the outdoors.

With that in mind, I would say that the most important issue facing the Yosemite Wilderness is ensuring that no matter how many people are out there, that they go out with a sense of stewardship and responsibility.

While NPS does an excellent job ensuring that trailhead quotas are not exceeded, I believe that the Yosemite Wilderness could be better protected if greater efforts were put toward hiker and backpacker education and engagement. For example, the permitting system at Grand Canyon NP requires that prior to submitting a permit request, applicants watch a video detailing Leave No Trace ethics and the dangers hikers should be aware of. For itineraries that are considered aggressive (long days, high mileage), applicants are also required to fill out a hiker information sheet where they must list and describe their itinerary day-by-day (including per-day mileage), list their equipment, and list previous experience. The idea is not to exclude novices, but to ensure that backpackers have prepared adequately to be able to answer the questions ahead of time. This approach has two benefits: 1) It helps foster a sense of responsibility/stewardship in a permit applicant, and 2) It forces folks to prepare adequately for the upcoming adventure, so that they are less likely to need emergency evacuation or medical attention from the NPS.

The current Yosemite Wilderness permitting process glosses over this part. Yes, there is a list of rules that all backpackers need to read and sign - - but this step is done so quickly and easily that it does not foster a sense of stewardship responsibility in the permit holder. This is evident in the amount of "Sierra white flower" toilet paper that is seen in highly-impacted areas and in the numbers of campsites set up merely feet away from water sources.

I work in the environmental field and deal with similar stewardship issues in my job. While it's safe to say that there is no fool-proof way to ensure 100% responsible stewardship by all users of wilderness areas, there are a few minor actions that can be taken to help foster that responsibility. For example, it could be that asking permit holders to also sign their name in a public, visible way (such as on a large poster on the wall of the permit office) will foster more responsibility in them than only signing the permit form itself. Or it could be that providing backpackers with some sort of a reminder of LNT rules (such as on a sticker to put on their water bottle) would provide just enough of a reminder throughout the trip (as opposed to relying on the rules printed on the permit, which for the most part ends up in a wallet tucked away for most of the trip).

I've learned many of these interventions (such as social norms, communications and incentives) from an evidence-based approach that I use to help create behavior change called Community-Based Social Marketing. The approach is detailed in the book "Fostering Sustainable Behavior" by Dr. Doug McKenzie-Mohr, which is FREELY available at www.cbsm.com (I'm not affiliated with this website; I merely use it because it works). CBSM is step-by-step, research-based approach that would help the NPS identify effective approaches to engaging the public in managing wilderness areas.

It goes without saying, but another issue that needs major attention is the arcane fax-in permit system. I hear that changes are in the works, and I hope to see those implemented soon!

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments and participate in this important process.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 68 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,28,2015 11:31:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I appreciate the chance to experience world class wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

How to protect the parks assets while still allowing access by all groups of people, old as well as young.

Comments: It is our understanding that part of the current review process involves consideration of removing beds in the High Sierra Camps, i.e. Merced Lake High Sierra Camp by 18 beds, and at the Glen Aulin camp by 4 beds.

We believe this is a ill considered plan. As aging hikers my wife (65) and myself (67) finally have the time and resources to travel in order to hike in the great national parks, but of course, at this time in our lives we are unable to carry the heavy backpacks that we once carried. We cannot carry the food, tent, etc required for camping in upland wilderness. This has become a significant constraint the access to and travel in the back country.

Last year, my wife and I hiked the High Sierra loops on a ranger assisted hike staying at the camps. This arrangement made it possible for us to see this amazing place and helped us to understand directly why the parks wilderness needs to be protected. However, we were one of the lucky few. Most people applying are not so lucky. And this is without reducing the number of beds. In fact, most of our fellow hikers were "older" hikers like us. Many had never been in the back country of Yosemite before.

THE REDUCTION OF BEDS AT HIGH SIERRA CAMPS MEANS THAT YOU ARE MAKING THE PARK MUCH LESS ACCESSIBLE TO THOSE VERY PEOPLE WHO YOU WANT TO CARE ABOUT AND SUPPORT THE ENTIRE PARK (NOT JUST THE ICONIC YOSEMITE VALLEY). DON'T DO IT!!! IN FACT, IT WOULD MAKE MORE SENSE TO ADD BEDS.

Thank you for your consideration

Correspondence ID: 69 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,28,2015 13:34:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS has done a good job of balancing the use of the park and the impact of its many visitors. I think there is a need to spread the visitors use of Yosemite out to a wider area. Access to the Merced river spreads the use and allows visitors to view the park with minimal impact. Boats float on top of water, do not disturb the eco system beneath it. With a properly managed put in and take out area the impact on the park shall be minimal.

Topic Question 2:

Allowing open access to the entire park for all visitors yet limiting the vehicle impact.

Comments: Yosemite is a wonderful place and to be able to go into the park and experience all it has to offer should be a goal of the NPS. How the NPS manages this goal is important. Human powered transportation through designated corridors is essential, yet the NPS can not confine the wilderness experience to a one path, one way system, Yosemite is not a Zoo a Museum. to experience a wilderness to be able to take the path less traveled. to wonder around and explore.

Through designated access points and providing education to visitors this can be done.

Floating on the MERCED is but one example of how the NPS can manage this. a slow float on the river can provide and incredible experience to park visitors. opening up the river would allow visitors to experience the park in a natural unhorsing way that has not been allowed for many years. the river flows freely, access to the river should be as well.

Correspondence ID: 70 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Dec,28,2015 14:30:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

- -trail maintenance
- -trail signs
- -ranger knowledge and involvement with hikers
- -shuttle busses keep traffic lighter

Topic Question 2:

- -access; it is almost impossible to secure reservations at any of the facilities (I know this isn't true wilderness issue, but it is an issue for the park as a whole) How to address: I hesitate to say more camping/cabins/permits, but over the last 20-30 years so much has been removed. Can some be replaced?
- -true wilderness access points are amazing- -varied, well marked
- -enforcement (bear canisters, off trail hiking, etc) How to address: more seasonal rangers, education at time of wilderness permits?

Comments: High Sierra Camps: This is a unique and amazing feature of YNP. It is a way for people who are aging out of backpacking to still enjoy the back country. Please keep them out of the wilderness area designation so they can remain open. If you want to limit stock impact, take the commercial stables out of the park. You already have a way to limit the number of people at these camps as reservations are done on a lottery system, (which is impossible to get into, aka 'win', from my experience).

By the way, your older users are probably your biggest donors to Yosemite Conservancy. You don't want to alienate them by restricting access, do you?

Correspondence ID: 71 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Dec,28,2015 17:46:59

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Love that Yosemite provides both a) access for the masses in the Valley and b) back-country experiences for the adventures up near Tuolumne. Both are needed.

Topic Question 2:

Yosemite Valley: Get rid of the cars. Busses and out of park parking lots.

Back-country: Increase the infrastructure (water, sewage, sanitation) for the High Sierra Camps and increase capacity to make these gems more accessible to the general public.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 72 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Dec,28,2015 20:01:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Attempts to limit access to keep it from being over used..

Topic Question 2:

continuing limiting the access to keep it a wilderness.

Comments: We are 2 time High Sierra Camp visitors. WE love the HSC's, as they allow access for people who dont want to or cant backback in carrying a heavy pack.

The Camps are a very special place, and I hope they can be preserved..

Correspondence ID: 73 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Dec,29,2015 16:01:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I love that the high Sierra camps are available, even if on a limited basis, so that older people such as me can enjoy the area. Please keep the camps!

Topic Question 2:

overcrowding is an issue - too many people showing up at Yosemite without considering that other had the same wonderful idea.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 74 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Dec,29,2015 20:18:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The High Sierra Camps for backpackers and tent cabin campers, despite who does or does not dine in the dining room, is a valuable experience. If you can hike up to the various High Sierra Camps you will meet like minded people who will encourage you on to your next beautiful stop and you will trade trail stories with strangers who will then seem like friends.

Topic Question 2:

I would welcome some parking lot outside the High Sierra rte 120 area, like in Groveland, for High Sierra backpackers like myself or other campers. I would gladly take a shuttle from Groveland rather than driving my car to a parking lot near Tuolumne Lodge. The parking along the rte 120 road is really frenzied and not good!

Comments: The High Sierra area is not that well known to the majority of visitors. Better, more frequent shuttles from the valley with better explanation of the destination sites would help.

Correspondence ID: 75 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,01,2016 18:37:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the way the NPS makes the Yosemite wilderness available to a wide variety of individuals with different capabilities and comfort levels. The NPS manages programs and spaces for hardcore backpackers to day car tourists effectively. One of the best tools the NPS has to introduce more park visitors to the wilderness experience without removing them completely from their comfort zone are the High Sierra Camps. These camps provide a totally unique experience that is not available to visitors anywhere else in the US. They are a critical stepping stone to show more visitors Yosemite's back country that would never otherwise be able to experience it.

Topic Question 2:

The High Sierra Camps are central to Yosemite's identity and mission but must be managed carefully to minimize their environmental impact. The HSCs provide a critical experience to visitors that cannot be found anywhere else and in and of itself is one of the best advertisements for conservation of the park and it's wilderness. These camps create hundreds of new conservationists each year.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 76 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,02,2016 15:39:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I was privileged to be a first time looper in 2015 . Staying at the high camps was an experience of a life time. The camps were well cared for and the environment was respected ie water , bathrooms , storing of food .

Topic Question 2:

Leave no trace - visit and leave as little of a footprint as possible.

I was on a guided hike . Perhaps all should be .

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 77 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,02,2016 21:49:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

the access to persons with all abilities. The hard core that can live in the outdoors with minimal gear and the ones whose physical limitations only allow them to carry their bodies and not gear. The high sierra camps must be preserved for all future generations with no reduction in the bed number.

Topic Question 2:

abuse from those who feel that everything belongs to them. Access must be kept open but abuse must be limited. it is the wilderness and loud noises, roudy groups must be limited.

Comments: I have many memories from Yosemite and I share them with whoever wants to listen. Many of these memories involve my daughter and hiking through the falls, Tuolumne meadows and the high sierra camps.

The camps have formed left indelible memories in both my daughters mind and mine. they are treasures that she should be able to share with her future children and they should be able to participate in them as well.

Correspondence ID: 78 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,03,2016 12:37:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I love the fact that they preserve to pristine natural environment of the Yosemite Valley, and allow us the opportunity to hike the guided High Sierra Camp trails. I was able to participate in a trip last August with my children, and they still rave about the wonderful experience we had. They state that it is the best vacation we have ever had as a family.

Topic Question 2:

Please continue to preserve Yosemite in it's beauty, and please continue to allow us the interactive experience of guided Ranger hikes on the High Sierra Camps.

Comments: The above experience convinced us to become John Muir Sponsors of the Yosemite Conservancy! We really love it there!

Correspondence ID: 79 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,04,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The strong LNT principles that are promoted/enforced, permitted access to limit impact, non-designated campsites, use of bear canisters.

One of the biggest strengths I see right now is that non-guided and guided visitors have equal opportunity to permits and enjoyment of the backcountry. This is critical to the NPS mission. Guided visitors deserve equal access to the wilderness as non-guided visitors. They're both segments of the general public, and people without the gear or experience to safely enjoy the backcountry should not be discriminated against with restricted access to permits or guided services.

Topic Question 2:

Sheer popularity and the impact of the numbers of people who visit Yosemite. I feel they are being addressed well with permitted access for overnight use, limited permits on Half Dome, and consistent patrolling of the wilderness by excellent backcountry rangers.

I do feel that guided groups are much less likely to have a negative impact on the wilderness than non-guided groups (we've witnessed some truly horrendous behavior from non-guided groups over the years). Bottom line is that many people don't have the training, education, equipment or experience to travel in the backcountry responsibly. There are always going to be these folks in the wilderness, but with guides people are educated and trained how to take care of our precious wild places. The guides love the wilderness and are trained to be good stewards of it.

If I can be frank, sometimes it seems the NPS sees a conflict between guiding services and wilderness, and in fact in practice I feel it's the opposite. The principles of wilderness - conservation, education, stewardship, and responsibility - are impressed upon visitors by guides. In every case of egregious backcountry use we've witnessed over the last 10 years, it has been by non-guided groups.

Comments: I feel very strongly that guided hiking and backpacking in Yosemite is a vital and critical element to assist the general public in responsibly enjoying the backcountry, and that is should not be limited. Guiding services fulfill the mission of the NPS:

"The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the ENJOYMENT, EDUCATION, and INSPIRATION of this and future generations. The Park Service COOPERATES WITH PARTNERS to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and OUTDOOR RECREATION throughout this country and the world." (capitals my emphasis)

The majority of Americans don't have the training, equipment or experience to safely and enjoyably travel the backcountry on their own. Guide companies facilitate the ENJOYMENT, EDUCATION and INSPIRATION for these folks. They are PARTNERS of the NPS to further the mission of conservation and OUTDOOR RECREATION to the general public.

Again, people who prefer or need guided services should not be discriminated against by having their access to the backcountry limited. Guided and non-guided visitors should have equal access to enjoy the wilderness their tax dollars support.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 80 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,04,2016 11:36:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the degree to which commercial use is made available to the public. Guided trips are an important way that the public learns about responsible ways to use the wilderness while leaving no trace and being safe. Without the education and leadership provided by commercial trips, there are more uneducated users harming the backcountry, and fewer skilled users (guides) to mitigate the impact of less responsible parties.

Topic Question 2:

Wildfire is a major issue, and education and increased funding seem like two important avenues for working on this issue.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 81 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,04,2016 12:12:04

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS is doing a great job! You have so many challenges, but you have managed to keep the park open to everyone in ways that continue to increase understanding of the enormous value of Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

Keeping the park accessible to everyone even though the impact of people on Yosemite is daunting.

Comments: I first came to Yosemite as a child. Later, when I was 15, I began hiking the John Muir Trail from the Yosemite valley with a friend. Last summer I hiked the High Sierra Camps with Ranger Jana. I appreciate everything the Park Service does to keep the experience of Yosemite available to everyone. I know it is a difficult job, so thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Correspondence ID: 82 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,04,2016 16:08:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

In regard to Yosemite National Park, the shuttle system has helped a lot with controlling the number of personal vehicles clogging the roadways and emitting pollution. The Comprehensive Interpretive Plan shows realistic, forward-thinking movement toward increasing public education of the National Park and wilderness, which is critical to preserving our natural areas.

Topic Question 2:

Considering the growing number of people visiting the Yosemite Wilderness, environmental education is very important. Continuing to implement school and public programs teaching Leave No Trace ethics and appreciation for wildlife and wildlands should continue. Commercial operations are also important because they allow people to access some of the more remote areas, while gaining an appreciation for those areas and learning to take care of the land. Continuing to allow guided trips into the Yosemite Wilderness is a good way to expand education and appreciation. Since the regulations for guided trips are stringent, the NPS can be assured that the wilderness is well-taken care of.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 83 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,04,2016 18:13:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The hybrid methodology by which so many of the features of the back country is maintained best suits the limited resources available to the NPS. Partnerships with the various not-for-profit (and, to a somewhat lesser degree, commercial) enterprises provides an opportunity for a wide variety of visitors to experience the *wild*erness while keeping it wild. The controls and, perhaps more importantly, the care by the users who REALLY want to be "out there," strike a perfect balance of accessibility.

Topic Question 2:

Like the Valley, use of Wilderness areas requires balance between use and preservation. Anyone advocating paved roads to Merced Lake or, at the other crazy extreme, a fence around the entire area doesn't deserve to be heard. "Wilderness" does not mean absolute isolation. Rather it should be a part of the country's natural resources that are reasonably managed.

Comments: The experience of a High Sierra Camp trip is a lifetime treasure. BALANCE of their use is the way to keep families' wilderness opportunities possible while keeping the area clean, open, and free. The limited access currently available to the public is not excessive. I tried for eight years to get a ranger-guided trip before finally succeeding. Limited numbers (lottery!?!) satisfy the requirements for this balance. The heartwarming memories (e.g., six nights, seven days, and 79 kilometers on the High Sierra Loop and I saw exactly ONE piece of litter - probably attributable to an accidental drop) and the relationships I developed with my co-Loopers have already been passed down to my ten year old grandtwins. I'd hate to see their opportunity disappear.

Correspondence ID: 84 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,04,2016 19:18:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate that NPS asks for public feedback on issues facing Yosemite Wilderness as well as the restricting use of the wild lands so as not to be a "free for all".

Topic Question 2:

Yosemite Wilderness is far different than Yosemite Valley and the challenges are different in many aspects, but the underlying issues have to do with accessibility by the public and conserving and preserving this majestic jewel. Even on the High Sierra Loop trail, traces of human destruction would be possible without encouragement AND strict enforcement of conservation practices ("Leave NO trace") and monitoring accessibility. That said, properly managed access to the wilderness MUST continue if we are to preserve the wilderness and beauty. Without access and experiencing nature at her best, one cannot and will not fight adamantly for preservation if there is not a personal connection with the land.

Comments: I have always loved the great outdoors and spend as much time enjoying this great land of ours as possible. But much of my draw to the wilderness is in great part and thanks to those who brought it to my attention as a young adult -- John Muir, Ansel Adams, Bob Mangelson, Lester Roundtree and many others. Without their access years ago, they would not have been able to inspire me. Without my love of the wilderness (especially California) I would not be able to encourage my children and my friends and their children and their children's friends to walk with nature.

I believe one cannot and will not fight for something if there is not a personal connection and a deep experience from which to draw from. Reading about the great Sierras is not the same as breathing in the Sierras from atop Vogelsang. I was lucky to have the experience of the seven day High Sierra Loop Trail this past summer. I have been visiting the high sierra camps for the past 10 years but this was my first loop trip. It was a highlight of my life. There could never be a substitute for this personal experience and I want others to share in this experience and love and gratitude of nature. The lottery for the loop trails is an extremely poor way to manage guests. Although I would LOVE the chance to do the loop trail again, others need to experience this as well.

If the lottery is to remain, it must be expanded to allow additional travelers as well as NEW travelers. The experience must be spread to new blood in order to expand the pool of those who fall in love with the mountains and thus support their preservation and management. If you have looped, you should not be able to return for 2 years in order to allow others to live the experience.

Reducing the number of visitors at some camps is a move in the wrong direction. The number of guests should be expanded, not reduced. This means the infrastructure needed to increase the camps needs to be refined and managed more resourcefully in order to accommodate guests. Careful management of the expansions and best practices for management is needed. Expansion can be done properly without destroying the environment or stressing systems. Better practices for sanitation and building and energy usage/consumption need to be employed.

Stewardship of the land is absolutely vital and this must be demonstrated and demanded. Our Nat'l Park loop ranger, Karyn O'Hearn, not only taught us about nature but BREATHED it - - she made us want to know and learn more and appreciate it simply because of her enthusiasm and true love of the wilderness. Without her insights and knowledge our loop experience would have been FAR FAR less. Investing in persons like Karyn so they can be compensated adequately and be considered a resource and beacon for stewardship is vital to preserving our wonderful wilderness. Expand opportunities for our rangers and pay them well - - they are Yosemite Wilderness's best ambassadors. Period.

Keep the High Sierras beautiful and accessible for all - - always!

Correspondence ID: 85 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,04,2016 23:08:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I most value getting to hike with a professional who knows about the land and how to treat it to guide me through the backcountry. Its a much more authentic experience.

Topic Question 2:

I think the most important issues facing Yosemite today are the effects of climate/environmental disruption and improper use by visitors. That's why I think increasing the about of commercial use of personal use would help to educate the average visitor about both issues.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 86 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 00:15:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Given the volume of visitors i am extremely impressed by my experience as a frequent visitor over the past 25 years. People just perpetually smile and keep oohing and ahing despite traffic,warm coke or long waits at park entrances.

The park must remain accessible to as many people as possible because one glimpse of the grandeur can be a transformative experience.

Topic Question 2:

I am writing in support of continuing the high Sierra camps. No words can describe how treasured these places represent to those few of us lucky to have stayed.

I have traveled many places on this planet and nothing tops hiking the high Sierra loop with a yosemite ranger.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 87 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 04:24:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I consider the NPS as the only entity in position for this role. However, having completed the JMT in a through-hike in Sept 2011, we saw only one NPS Backcountry Ranger (and he was a seasonal ranger at that) in our 21 days of trekking. We never saw any USFS personnel! I would desire more presence of NPS/USFS personnel in the backcountry, this to maintain enforcement regarding those who ignore the ethics of LNT and ruin the wilderness for others.

Topic Question 2:

The lack of ranger presence and the resulting abuse by visitors to the backcountry. No doubt the challenges of wilderness education, human waste and over use by visitors are daunting. My personal take is it needs to strengthened in some areas (WAG Bag usage and/or TP and cat-holing techniques) and then again, more opportunity to get access.

Comments: This may become lengthy and I apologize for that.

I absolutely love the Sierras! Yosemite is the crown jewel of the greatest wilderness remaining in California! The challenges to maintain its beauty and keep it wild are great. Having moved to Arizona 13 years ago, I have grown to love and enjoy the Grand Canyon National Park, yet I long for the streams, lakes and the magnificent granite of the Sierras. Both Yosemite and Grand Canyon National Parks host huge numbers of visitors, and do so well, but the wilderness in both parks suffers from the abuse of the uneducated visitors.

It is my position that by using professional guide services, docents and posted backcountry rangers, the chronic abuse occurring in the wilderness, could be minimized. There simply is insufficient trained professionals in areas that are the critical wilderness. Education and peer-group compliance is best achieved by using those who are committed to their environment to set the examples.

I would request the Yosemite National Park administration strongly consider utilizing professional guide services in the capacity of LNT, ethical recreation, and education for those who seek wilderness adventures. Income to the park is gained thru professional guide services and the trips are safe, supervised and educational in their presentation to the guest. The goal for the NPS should be a "win-win-win" scenario: LNT ethics, wilderness adventure and safety for the participant.

The below is a copy and paste letter I sent in 2014 regarding the human waste challenges on the Mt Whitney Trail. I am uncertain if this has been successfully addressed since. But the same issues essentially remain... use, abuse, and education through out the Sierras and too, the Grand Canyon.

Thank you for your time in considering my input. (-RWH Prescott, AZ-)

To the attention of: October 1, 2014

Margaret Wood; District Ranger, Inyo National Forest

Diana Pietrasanta; Recreation Staff Officer, Inyo National Forest

Debra Schweizer; Public Affairs Specialist, Inyo National Forest

Woody Smeck; Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park

Jana Friesen-Mc Cabe; Acting Public Information Officer, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park

This letter is submitted with great reluctance and frustration. It has been created with the hope that our beloved Mt Whitney can be restored to its wilderness glory by improving the present system of providing Blue Bags for human waste disposal.

I believe it was in at the end of the 2006 Season that the two Solar Toilets were removed from the Whitney Trails backpacking camps. In the subsequent years of the WAG Bag alternative program, perhaps 2% of the climbers have routinely failed to use the issued WAG Bag, resulting in a mess that the rest of us must deal with. Additionally, there has been no program to clean up after those scofflaws. The former WAG Bags that were ditched all along the trail over the years have now been added to with the newer Blue Bags.

In 2011 I climbed Mt Whitney from the western slope, while completing the John Muir Trail. During the hike from Sequoia National Parks Crabtree Meadows Ranger Station, to just below Trail Crest, we saw no discarded WAG Bags. However, upon descending the eastern slope, the abandoned WAG Bags and exposed human waste combined to create flagrant Karma Violations everywhere (=See: Photo #2=). The assumption could be made the presence of a seasonal NPS Ranger, posted at Crabtree Meadows, would be the reason for the western slope compliance. Then again, it could be the commitment of the dedicated backpackers who pass through this section and further, that no Day Hikers are on this route.

One aspect continually remains; the Mt Whitney Day Hikers, who use the eastern trail route, could be to blame. Noting that the abuse is occurring on both sides of the eastern slopes Mt Whitney Trail and primarily between both of Mt Whitneys backpack camps, a pattern emerges. The routine bowel cycle of the Day Hiker likely results in a bowel movement about: 5 to 7AM. Depending upon their speed and start time, this urge confronts them at about 10,300 Outpost Camp or perhaps, 12,300 Trail Camp. It is highly probable that Day Hikers have no desire or motivation to continue to carry their now used Blue Bag any further, especially when the foul smelling package will remain with them another ten or more hours. So the Blue Bag is therefore discarded, sometimes discretely, sometimes not.

Any foray, a mere ten or twenty feet off any side of the Whitney Trail or walking about the general area of the two backpacker camps, reveals the abuse the scofflaws commit. One does not have to work hard to find abandoned Blue Bags, some new, some faded, but all used. Outright exposed human excrement and toilet paper is lying about also (=Refer: Photo #2=). Simply rolling over rocks reveals more! The abuse is seen just about everywhere on the route. On my recent 9-4-14 summit climb, I discovered midway along the 1.9 mile summit-ridge trail (at 13,900) a Blue Bag had been cast down some 30 feet in the couloir (window) between two ridgeline spires. Further, on the descent, at the lower end of the switchbacks and just a foot off the trail, we came across a discarded and opened Blue Bag, both its unused toilet paper pack and wet hand wipes lying beside human feces (=See: Photo #1=). There is no denying the ongoing ecological impact is severe. This is occurring in a Federal Wilderness, where man as a visitor, is supposed to leave only footprints.

A two-fold ecological concern must be expressed, one for the small lake alongside 12,300 Trail Camp and secondly, for the general watershed within Lone Pine Canyon. As the lake is the last water along the Mt Whitney Trail route, it becomes a primary water source for backpackers and Day Hikers. In all of my years climbing Mt Whitney, this year the algae growth within the lake has noticeably increased. Admittedly, this could be due to lower water levels or warmer weather. E-coli has likely introduced to the area by the high use and abuse of human waste being deposited all over the mountain. This should certainly be a concern. Increasing bacteria counts in the lake and watershed can only be assumed. This is a potential health issue; it should be determined and monitored. One question comes to mind and that leads to another. What is the lifespan of the Blue Bags plastic when exposed to solar UV radiation? When the plastic degrades, are these abandoned WAG/Blue Bags potential biological time-bombs?

It is evident there is no enforcement or at the least there is a strong perception of such by the 2%er on the eastern slope of the Mt Whitney Trail. The Sequoia National Parks Crabtree Meadows Ranger Station is posted every season. As in general society, if no police are seen, problems arise. Thus, in the Wilderness: no Ranger presence, plus no enforcement, likely will result in no compliance. It was years ago (2001) I met one seasonal USFS Ranger at Trail Camp and a week later again at Iceberg Lake; he explained he was posted on Mt Whitney for that season. He was very professional each time and it remains my only encounter with a USFS Ranger on the eastern side in all the climbs I have done there. Conversations with friends have revealed experiences that are similar, few if any Rangers seen in the backcountry. The sad reality is: the quality of the John Muir Wilderness is being diminished by the WAG/Blue Bag 2% flure rate. Two percent every year, upon every year, =without removal = adds up to a substantial accumulation of unacceptable human waste.

As with the television program: Undercover Boss, if one simply uses this tactic at the Interagency Centers Permit Counter, it will reveal the lack of education offered to climbers on the use of WAG/Blue Bags and the issues involved. The WAG/Blue Bags are simply handed across the Permit Counter with no explanation. It is accepted 98% of us know what to do, but it is those 2%es that need education on the concept. Further, being the boss empowers one to step out of the office and simply wander about off trail anywhere in the Whitney Zone. Here the abandoned WAG/Blue Bags can be discovered everywhere! With an imagination, the many hiding places the scofflaws use will be revealed. The present situation is a travesty. The Wilderness we have cherished for fifty years deserves better from us all.

A survey could be done at the Mt Whitney Trailhead, soliciting climbers experiences on the Whitney Trail and their suggestions for a solution to this human waste issue. With the 2014 season ending, here are a few possible solutions to address the human waste challenges on Mt Whitney:

Create a video to address the issues of human waste; all climbers would be required watch it at the Interagency Visitors Center prior to issuance of their permit. This could also be made available on-line. Education is always of value! The video should show the process of cat-holing and how to carry out toilet paper. Additionally, in my leading on Mt Whitney, I advise a second gallon-zip-loc bag to double package the WAG/Blue Bag and a large-mouth nut jar to place the package within. By doing this, the feces odor is effectively blocked for up to 4 or 5 days.

However, all my years of municipal law enforcement have shown scofflaws will always plague humanity and education only goes so far.

The UFSF/NPS should consider printing a CPU number on each individual Blue Bag (in production at the factory/or by USFS-NPS employees or volunteers/ or upon issuing to a climber). Using this CPU number with a credit card number (or a cash deposit), all could be processed as a bond at the time of permit issuance to ensure compliance. If the Blue Bag is abandoned on the trail and not scanned upon exit at the human waste depository station, the bond is forfeited and any future Whitney Permits would be denied for that individual. This process is admittedly, open to fraud and is problematic in-of-itself. Some could scan their Blue Bag before hiking up (that can be addressed by permit dates being in the data base system) and a claim of theft from the permit holder; however who would steal a used Blue Bag? After-all, nobody picks up the abandoned ones now! Further, the scanner (if employed as a tactic) could be missed at the trailhead by exhausted stragglers returning in the dark. Whether the CPU number is valid or not, it at least implies the potential for enforcement. As such, if nothing else, a CPU number would enable identification of an abandoned Blue Bag back to whom it was issued; this is a subtle method of gaining compliance.

Perhaps offer the WAG/Blue Bags as an option. The hardy and committed will comply; they do already! The alternate for neophytes would be the return of

the Solar Toilets and/or a resumption of the cat-hole tactic (but cat-holing requires education). However in short order, knowing this, no one will use the WAG/Blue Bags and the past problems and issues that resulted from Solar Toilets resume; which is also unacceptable.

A consultation with Grand Canyon National Park regarding their backcountry Solar Toilet program would be in order. This may reveal concepts which have proven to be successful, when addressing bio-hazards and too, the cost of supporting the Solar Toilet systems via helicopter. The Grand Canyon National Park Backcountry Permit Fees remain at parity with those Wilderness Permits issued on other federal lands. Something they are doing, within their Parks process, is making it work and work well.

At the least, consider an annual or bi-annual volunteer effort, committed to cleaning-up the trails accumulation of Bio-Hazard human waste and litter. Pride and ownership make for strong ties with climbers, the USFS/NPS and the Wilderness we all cherish. If invited, many Clubs and Foundations would gladly step up to make a difference on Mt Whitney.

In closing it should be revealed I am a retired LAPD officer, who takes great pride in my numerous summits of Mt Whitney. Beginning what has become a life passion, my first summit on the Big One was in 1994. Since, I have attained 49 of the United States state highpoints, completed the county highpoints of both Arizona and Nevada, and tagged the summits of 29 of Colorados 55 Fourteeners. I have maintained a devoted ten year commitment, proudly composing the Safety On Summits column in the Highpointers Club Quarterly Newsletter.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 88 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 08:02:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS empowers similar like minded companies to recreate in the park with the expectation of teaching natural history, LNT and other pertinent wilderness topics.

Topic Question 2:

Guiding in the park. I believe backcountry guiding should be allowed in the park as a means to educate the public about issues the land faces. Interpretation about the natural and cultural history can be lost without the ability to translate.

Comments: We need backcountry guiding in Yosemite National Park. It is an alternative route to interpretation and the preservation of knowledge.

Correspondence ID: 89 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 11:21:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The N.P.S. is currently upholding its mission of providing for visitor enjoyment while leaving the place un-impaired for the future. The High Sierra Camps are steeped in tradition and allow people who would not otherwise be able to enjoy the true nature of Yosemite's Wilderness in such a deep and profound way. Remember that these camps are not in wilderness as per the 1984 Act, and were here first. Please do not reduce the already limited number of people who can enjoy these places. Also a 7 day loop-trip was removed from the itinerary several years ago due to lack of demand...please reinstate this trip!

Topic Question 2:

The onslaught of JMT and PCT hikers needs to be considered carefully. Llyle Canyon and LYV are getting hit hard. We need to protect these places while allowing people to enjoy them. Maybe a backpackers camp in Lylle, like the one in LYV, would mitigate some impacts.

Comments: The High Sierra Camps are a unique resource when compared to all other National Parks. Know that Mather created these camps the same year he made the N.P.S. with the idea of allowing people to get to know the wilderness. Unless people know themselves in the wilderness they will never find themselves there and will not care for it as their own. We need to maintain these camps at present levels and take care of the infrastructure there.

Remember that the death of the mule trains and the advent of the automobile were the founding principles that Leopold and Zahnzeizer were fighting against. Pack trains are "primitive and un-confined" types of recreation and should be used instead of helicopters when feasible.

Correspondence ID: 90 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 13:56:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The Yosemite wilderness lands still feel "wild" and this is what I would like to see preserved. The wilderness should be managed in much the same way as it has in the past, with the exception of the following:

1. Scale back or eliminate stock animals in wilderness areas. Nothing ruins trails faster than a train of mules or horses. No one wants to have to step around "road apple" and smell urea in the summertime. Stock should be limited to assisting in trail maintenance only. Humans visiting the wilderness should travel under their own power and carry what they need themselves.
2. Create new trails in the wilderness to alleviate congestion to existing popular trails. Yosemite Valley suffers from too few "premier" trails. Visitor experience is diminished on the Vernal/Nevada Falls/ Half Dome Tr, 4 mile trail, and Yosemite Falls Trail. Bring back the Ledge Trail behind Curry Village that went to the rim. Bring back the Old Big Oak Flat Road as a trail. Create two or three other new trails that start at the Valley floor and go to the rim. How about a trail that wraps around Upper Cathedral Spire? Let's spread the hikers out and improve everyone's experience.
3. Encourage more human-powered use of the wilderness by allowing visitors to use Mountain Bikes on selected trails. Back in 1989, there were few mountain bikers. Today, mountain biking is a popular, healthy, and mainstream activity that brings people to the great outdoors. Many trails in the Bay Area see more mountain bike visits than hiking and equestrian visits combined. Why not allow some mountain biking in the Park?

Topic Question 2:

The Park Service needs to resist building roads for non-human-powered travel into wilderness. Roads allow cars and effectively cancel the feel of being in the wilderness (being close to any road ruins the wild feel of a place). Also, no cell-phone towers or any other large structures or buildings for commercial use or public use. I would be OK with the occasional exception to the strict interpretation of the wilderness act in the following way:

1. Limited use of small camps (such as the High Sierra Camps, but do not expand them and they must be resupplied by humans, not stock).
2. Limited use of high angle "trail access equipment" such as the cables on Half Dome or guardrails on the Ledge Trail. Maybe even a "via ferrata" in a

wilderness area that is close to the road. Other guardrail-type devices to facilitate steep and scenic new trails in higher-use wilderness areas near the road.
3. Allow exceptions to power tool use for NPS trail maintenance crews so they can do their job safely, quickly, and more efficiently.

Comments: I love the mountains and I love biking. My whole life, I have hiked, backpacked, and rock climbed in the YNP wilderness but I have had to limit my mountain biking passion to local Bay Area trails. I believe there are certain Park trails that would be compatible with mountain biking. Not every trail, but a careful study will find existing trails that would be great for mountain biking. Do not be fooled by those that attempt to scare folks with stories of young "hellions" running over older folks with their bikes. I'm 42 years old and mountain bike with people as young as 8 and as old as 81. I'm a leave-no-trace adherent, I pack out my trash and any other trash I find on the trail, and I volunteer my time to help maintain my local mountain biking trails. There are thousands like myself who cherish biking on trails. Why not bring mountain bikers into the NPS family of visitors and stewards?

Correspondence ID: 91 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 13:58:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Government oversight and private sector implementation for operation of venues is the best model for the Park.

Topic Question 2:

Access on a daily basis should be limited via a reservation permit during spring and summer months for all entries including trucks and automobiles. Tour buses with passengers from foreign counties should be restricted from entering the park on the 4th of July, Labor Day and Memorial Day weekends. Litter control and education particularly on trails and the riverbanks should be addressed.

Comments: The more you can redesign camp sites to accommodate today's camping vehicles (RV's) you will decrease traffic and reduce congestion. Folks who come in the park with motor homes and trailers rarely move once they establish camp. They get around the park by foot, bicycle or bus. Campers who come in by car even tent only campground occupants, tend to use their cars to access venues and other in park destinations. I have been in Yosemite Park every year since 1967. Most campsite improvements have been made to accommodate HDCP visitors. While this is admirable and necessary effort, the sites to often go unused. What is needed is to expand the existing paved campground sites where possible, to accommodate 21st Century Camping vehicles. Another key improvement would be to bring electric power to as many campsites as possible to reduce noise and air pollution.

Correspondence ID: 92 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 14:41:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that they seek input into the process.

I value the time they appear to be putting into making and keeping Yosemite great.

I don't value the way they typically don't use the data they get from comments - it's like they are working to their agenda and just hoping the public comments will line up with that objective.

Topic Question 2:

Lack of Access. This is a place that means a lot to a lot of people. Unfortunately it also means very little to a vast group of foreigners who just want to check a box on their tour of the US some summer. I see them abusing the park all the time. All they do is clog the system and make the experience worse. This is not Disneyland! They need to know that. Maybe Yosemite needs to implement a US residents only policy for Monday-Friday, to make access for US citizens a priority.

Comments: Please keep Yosemite open to all Americans, even at the expense of foreign visitors. Yea, it sounds weird, but it's not as far fetched an idea as you might think. Instead of giving so much of ourselves, let's keep a little for ourselves this time.

Correspondence ID: 93 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 15:14:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the way the Yosemite Wilderness is currently available to a wide variety of users, but in a controlled fashion. The current management protocol allows for both the minimalist backpacker hiking in the back-country on their own, as well as ranger-guided groups hiking to Sierra High Camps. A variety of skills and abilities are equally welcome.

Topic Question 2:

I think the most important issues are overuse and misuse. Too many people concentrated in the most popular areas, too many cars just driving around (not going to and from a destination) and people who don't respect the wilderness and the others who want to enjoy it - littering, illegal fire, off-trail hiking, harassing wildlife, destroying/disturbing the flora.

Comments: I understand that the Wilderness Stewardship Plan review is considering restricting or eliminating use of the Sierra High Camps, including, but not limited to ending ranger-guided hikes, use of pack stock for supplying the camps and perhaps eliminating the camps altogether. I am very much opposed to this type of thinking. These camps have provided access and enjoyment for many people over almost 100 years and, from my experience 2 years ago, I saw no adverse affect on the environment. However, I cannot say the same for what I saw in the more popular areas of the park - they were definitely looking overcrowded.

I would definitely be in favor of raising fees for access to the park, as well as further limiting the number of people who can stay in the park and even enter the park (just to drive through). With an increased budget (from higher fees) and the use of modern technology, the NPS should be able to more effectively manage (and balance) the use of Yosemite in a fashion that lets an optimal number of people use it without overusing it or abusing it.

Correspondence ID: 94 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The permit process uses a 1979 navigate FAX system ... very out-of-date. Most do not have a fax...and have to go to FED EX to send in reservation requests. Internet technology is here in 2016 and should be used.

Rhetorical comment: Half Dome should not be included in the "Wilderness."

Useful addition for the public: Publicize broadly the "boundaries that define the "Wilderness." 400 ft below the valley rim? 1 mile from any roads / trails?? Publish / post maps.

Topic Question 2:

Many people are not aware that they are in the wilderness. Some trails have signage - many do not. So people don't know that the rules of "wilderness" apply. i.e. the Upper Mist Trail at the junction of the JMT and Mist (west of the toilets). There are several signs up high. One explains the rules for camping in the Wilderness....but there is not one saying "You are now entering the Wilderness." So most going to Half Dome do not realize this.

Comments: Keep up the good work. :-)

Correspondence ID: 95 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 18:52:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

I am very concerned about any initiatives that would result in a reduction in the number of days available for visitors to the Yosemite High Sierra Camps. I have traveled around the world and still consider this one of the top 3 vacations of my life. I would hate to see others denied of this fabulous opportunity. Please do not reduce the number of days this great trip is available. It is a life altering experience that should not be shortened or reduced.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 96 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 20:51:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS does an outstanding job managing the balance between visitors and preservation of the environment. Having done the 50-mile high sierra camp loop with Ranger Karyn O'Hearn this past Summer, I am even more appreciative. Each of the 5 high camps are precious. I hope that generations of folks to come, will be able to experience the interior of the park, and stays at all of these remarkable camps.

Topic Question 2:

The biggest issue I believe to be the sheer numbers of hikers and campers each year, who come to revel in the park's beauty. Some come prepared, others not so much. Down in the valley, there is pollution sometimes due to congestion. Up in the high country, the concern is backpackers who break the rules, like making camp too close to a lake. Allocating more money to the parks would be a good start in addressing problems. With greater staffing and management, we can keep Yosemite pristine!

Comments: Yosemite is my go-to soul balm. I love hiking all around the Tuolumne Meadows area. Some of the best days of my life have been spent in the park.

Correspondence ID: 97 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,05,2016 22:01:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

NPS does a good job in protecting the wilderness experience, and still allow people to enjoy this precious resource. However, when there is a limited supply of wilderness and lots of demand, it creates a potential economic imbalance. The lottery system is a fair way of dealing with demand.

Topic Question 2:

Overuse is probably the greatest concern.

Maybe technology can be used such as high definition video cameras to film popular vistas, wild animals, flowers, etc. as a substitute experience.

Comments: I enjoy the High Sierra camps. Please keep these camps operational.

The bears are too smart. More bear-resistant lockers may be needed in the wilderness areas for the convenience of the backpackers.

Correspondence ID: 98 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,06,2016 06:10:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have hiked in the High Sierra on several occasions. Access to the high Sierra camps makes this possible. We love the services available at the camps. We would like to maintain the camps at current levels to permit access while caring for the environment.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 99 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,06,2016 10:14:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The wildness of it. I also appreciate how food storage is mandatory and helps out the wildlife.

Topic Question 2:

People and crowds. First, stop using multimedia to advertise everything. I personally know that there are people more interested in "likes" vs. truly protecting the values that the Park Service manages. Facebook competition between parks, etc. STOP IT. No need to further promote crowding and call it outreach and such. Use multimedia only for park alerts such as road conditions, etc.

Also the NPS employees should also abide by the Wilderness rules. Don't be hypocritical to tell visitors one thing and they go in to the wilderness and see NPS violating these very rules (food storage, group size, etc.)

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 100 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,06,2016 11:04:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Limitation in impact sensitive areas is key. The Park Service must balance use and preservation. Education of behavior in the backcountry is most important, as one destructive group could have more impact than 10 groups educated in LNT. I believe commercial guiding can add a lot to this effort.

Topic Question 2:

Watersheds are a lifeblood. Their reach spans beyond park boundaries. As we saw in Colorado this year, upstream water disasters effects travel across all borders. The Park should support efforts to protect areas around Parks as well, such as mining out side of Grand Canyon in our neck of the woods.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 101 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,06,2016 11:57:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Being a minority and a first generation American, I have valued and continue to idea of national parks being "America's Best Idea". It's a space for all, future generations, and allows us to enjoy the beauty of one of the nation's greatest wilderness are, Yosemite. This is encouraging to me that the park service has continued to encourage others to visit the Yosemite from all facet of the world, rich or poor, and regardless of your background. It is more encouraging for me since there are more youth and diversity programs. The resource/management aspect of the park service has done a great job in protecting/restoring areas and habitats. Signs and fences are great to keep people stepping on damaged areas. I value the way it's being sound are being managed in certain areas of the park so I can enjoy the sound of nature/solitude.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues facing Yosemite wilderness today has to be educating/teaching/creating park stewards so that people learn LNT. To help keep wild places looking wild. Keep in increasing park diversity so that it encourages others to visit the park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 102 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,06,2016 13:34:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I strongly urge you to keep current capacity of the High Sierra Camps. I have tried for years to participate in the lottery but demand outstrips capacity every year. These are highly popular and extremely valuable venues for wilderness hiking, especially for hikers over 50 who enjoy the tent cabins and meals provided.

Correspondence ID: 103 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,06,2016 17:13:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The opportunity to hike to and stay in the High Sierra camps.

Topic Question 2:

Most important issues are man-made maintenance issues and related costs. Please keep limiting the population going to the High Sierra camps and charge more to access due to the costs of trash and garbage removal. However, please don't make it too expensive so that the young people can enjoy the camps too. Perhaps costs can be based on how distant the camp is from the place to which the garbage and trash must be hauled.

Comments: I look forward to hearing what NPS/DOI thinks are the most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness and how individuals can assist in the resolution of those issues.

Correspondence ID: 104 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,06,2016 18:16:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The backcountry trails for backpacking are fabulous. Having backpacked them since the 1960s the trail quota system is working and keeping 1/2 of the daily permits for 24 hours before put in is your best idea. I have hiked the whole JMT twice, unbelievably beautiful. The beginning of allowing rafting/kayaking on the Merced and T is a great beginning. Rivers seem to be like trails that should be able to be used by non-motorized vehicles. The worst thing that happens in the backcountry is the pack animals. They destroy the trails, poop everywhere, and are a pain in the rear. I've even heard the JMT called the John Mule Poop Trail. I feel the stock usage should be cut in half if not totally stopped.

Topic Question 2:
Stock animals

Comments: Yosemite has been run extremely well..... keep up the good work.

Correspondence ID: 105 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,07,2016 09:45:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate trying to control the number of cars that come through with the use of buses and other public transport. I also appreciate the impact that ethical and environmentally friendly guiding companies can have when introducing the public to the back country. I think they are an excellent way for folks new to the National Park to have an introduction that teaches LNT and makes them want to return.

Topic Question 2:

How do you preserve the wildness of the Yosemite wilderness and yet inspire as many visitors as possible?

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 106 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,07,2016 16:07:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I as a past participant in the Sierra loop trip felt that the people running the camps had a good handle on the task at hand. The individuals were respectful, knowledgeable and most helpful in any way necessary. They were good cooks also fun to be around, which helped make my experience phenomenal.

Topic Question 2:

I am not exactly sure of the most "important" issues today. However there are many issues that were discussed while we were using the camps. Water usage, trying to wait until it was necessary and combine washing. Composting toilets, if you had to go to the bathroom, digging away from any water source and covering correctly. Packing out anything you packed in. Not feeding animals.

Comments: As I already mentioned, I am a past participant of the Sierra Loop Trip. I am 53 years old and have rheumatoid arthritis. My husband and children have been backpacking for years, while I was unable to participate because the packs were too heavy when I would've had to carry food, sleeping mat, sleeping bag, and cookware/dishes.

When I was asked to join a group that was picked for the High Sierra Loop trip I was very excited. I did the trip and had an excellent time. It was an experience that I will never forget. The people in charge of the camps were great. I felt that what they did around camp was in the best interest of the Yosemite Wilderness. I also enjoyed the people in other groups, it was great to meet people from all walks of life coming together for a common interest. I would hate to see the size of the camps reduced, when it is already hard enough to win the lottery.

Correspondence ID: 107 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,07,2016 17:23:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I really like how much wilderness there is in the park, only a small part of it is urbanized so it's relatively easy to find a trail and some isolation. The trails themselves are kept very well, the trail crew is always on top of clearing out duff and making sure the trails are visible. And the people at the wilderness desk are also much appreciated for getting rid of illegal fire rings and other traces left behind by visitors.

Topic Question 2:

The visitors keep our parks open but they also tend to leave behind quite a few remnants of their presence. I think that we need to somehow educate visitors more on leave no trace principles, and the importance of keeping the wild animals wild and not feeding them. Yosemite rangers are doing a great job at bear talks at camp grounds, and the signs in the valley about not feeding the animals are great, but I still see a lot of visitors breaking those rules. Maybe we need to get rangers into schools to teach children about the importance of preserving the parks, because I don't think these people mean to leave such marks on the land, I think they are just not educated about how to be better park stewards.

Another issue is government cutbacks on the NPS budget, we need parks and ranger and all things that come with those amenities. In order to make the system more important to more people I like the idea of giving out park passes to kids each year, or making other incentives to get more people interested in the natural world and how to preserve it for the following generations.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 108 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,08,2016 08:21:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value how it is protected, preserved, and monitored and open for public recreational uses.

Topic Question 2:

How to protect native species, plants, animals. Bringing awareness, knowledge and leave no trace ethics to the visitors.

Comments: Thanks

Correspondence ID: 109 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,08,2016 22:38:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The wilderness areas are available for public enjoyment without excessive restrictions.

Topic Question 2:

Achieving a balance of enabling public visitation to some of the more remote wilderness areas while protecting those areas from becoming negatively impacted by development associated with visitor intrusion. For example, I believe that the High Sierra Camps are a wonderful amenity to the overall Yosemite wilderness experience. I also think that use of stock to serve and provide access to these camps adds a nice nostalgic touch. That being said, given the prospect of more severe droughts arising from the prospects of global climate change, it is appropriate to revisit the way the use of the camps are managed in light of increasing scarcity of potable water.

Comments: It is my understanding that the National Park Service has initiated measures to remove trout from certain of the back country lakes due to their perceived negative impact on an endangered species of frog. This is especially troublesome for those who enjoy trout fishing as part of a backpacking wilderness experience. Is there an existing comprehensive plan identifying those areas where the subject frog is threatened and posing alternative measures for its protection, some of which may not include trout eradication, or is the intent to piecemeal trout eradication on an ad hoc basis as a "simple solution"? I would think it appropriate that the Wilderness Stewardship Plan update address species protection in the context of also preserving recreational trout fishing opportunities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Correspondence ID: 110 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,09,2016 12:57:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that there are trail quotas for wilderness overnight permits and that visitors receive education on wilderness regulations. However, I think there are ways to improve the system for wilderness permits. First, it would be ideal for Yosemite to move toward an online permitting system like the one currently available for Inyo National Forest wilderness areas with night boxes available for permits. For education, each person (not just the trip leader) entering the backcountry should complete an in person or online information session with questions to test comprehension.

I also value that the Park Service leaves it up to the visitor to understand that the wilderness presents risks. I feel that users with wilderness skills should be free to explore and push their limits without restrictions from the park. At the same time, it is helpful to remind park visitors of the inherent risks/dangers and to provide opportunities for visitors to receive education to build knowledge and skills.

Topic Question 2:

Many wilderness areas in national parks, Yosemite included, are making compromises on the Wilderness Act requirements, especially related to the qualities of ensuring untrammeled landscapes. In some cases, this requirement might not be attainable with rising human populations and interest in wilderness experiences. However, there are some areas that could be addressed by the NPS: stock use and the High Sierra Camps.

Stock use:

First, the use of stock and the Wilderness Act requirements are not compatible (and this incompatibility is codified in the regulations due to historical uses of stock, so this presents a challenge in itself). This past summer I witnessed this first hand when hiking on the John Muir Trail through Kings Canyon NP. One night I was camped near a meadow by myself. I arrived at my camp spot at 5pm and there was nobody in the area. At around 9pm, suddenly, 20 horses, without any human monitoring, trampled through the meadow, wildly running into and out of the Middle Fork of the Kings River, eroding the river's banks and chomping voraciously at the delicate meadow grasses in this scenic spot, all night long. One horse wore a bell. Not only did the ringing bell, chomping, and plunging wreck my solitude (and sleep), but also this fragile landscape was literally being chewed up and destroyed. The next morning at 5am the wranglers came for their horses, which had been roaming freely all night long. This activity does not seem compatible with the Wilderness Act.

I also do not feel that the quantity of stock manure on the trails is compatible with the Wilderness Act - it is unsightly, smelly and polluting. The copious amounts of manure on the trail likely cause many backcountry users to see a conflict between the Leave No Trace principles that human visitors are required to follow and the lack of regulation on stock manure covering the trails, some of which cross or parallel creeks, rivers and lakes.

Thus, I recommend scaling back stock use significantly for only very specific circumstances:

1) For providing wilderness access to disabled persons, 2) For providing resupply services to nonprofit educational organizations that have a mission to bring wilderness access to disadvantaged and underserved populations, and 3) for transporting equipment for NPS trail maintenance/repairs that would not be practical to transport by human means.

High Sierra Camps:

I do not have first hand experience with the High Sierra Camps, but I do not think their use is compatible with the Wilderness Act. I feel that they should be reserved only for the use of disabled persons, to provide wilderness access to this population. Furthermore, the High Sierra Camps have recently been a source of plague and hantavirus, which signify that this environment is more closely aligned with a densely populated human environment and not a wilderness environment. By allowing easy access to wilderness locations, the NPS will also have to contend with the rise in garbage and other human overuse that comes with this easy access. Again, this inherently diminishes the value of the wilderness and is not a compatible use.

Comments: Thank you for considering my comments.

Correspondence ID: 111 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,09,2016 20:00:34

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The scope of the term "Yosemite Wilderness" is not clear to me. If that term includes the management of Yosemite Valley and the near camping locations of Bridalveil, Tuolumne and Wawona, then the efforts to preserve natural flora and fauna over the past 20 years or so have been valuable from my point of view. The massive influx of day use tourists in the valley has prompted stern measures designed to save the meadows and reduce traffic on the roadways. All good. As for the more remote wilderness, I have always valued not only the opportunities to make equestrian access to these truly special places possible but to be able to count on their continuing accessibility to me as I grow older (I am now in my 70's) and unable to visit as frequently.

Topic Question 2:

Yosemite is the world's premier destination for equestrians in terms of accessibility, length of season, variety of trail experience and sheer beauty of areas that can be reached on horseback. It is true that there are huge numbers of backpackers (as compared to the number of riders) that use the same wilderness trails, some of whom have little patience for sharing the trails. I suspect that, as they individually reach retirement age and realize they can no longer shoulder a 30-pound pack and cover 50 miles, they will then be grateful that the wise elders back in 2016 chose to retain the options for packing in by horse and mule to the places they have come to know and love.

Comments: I truly hope that at least once more, and so long as my wife and I can safely enter the Yosemite wilderness on horseback, that we can camp and enjoy the High Sierras in the only way possible for us. If what we wish is not the "true wilderness experience" that hikers prefer, so be it. It remains, and should remain, a part of the American Experience, open to as broad a range of park visitors as possible.

Correspondence ID: 112 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,10,2016 08:57:48

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

My husband and I recently completed the High Sierra 7 day hike with a ranger (Adrianna Hirtler). It was one of the best experiences of our lives. The wilderness truly was a wilderness. Most of the time, we couldn't see any signs of civilization other than the (occasional) other hikers. The camps seemed lovingly managed, by staff who truly enjoyed the role they had in taking care of us. I have some special food needs, and the staff went out of their way to make sure I had equivalent and beautiful meals, even if I had to eat differently from most others. Adrianna was extremely knowledgeable, carrying books to look up facts about the park that she might not already know, carrying first aid supplies for the blisters (luckily not us) that occurred during the trip and making each sunset and campfire talk an experience not to miss, even when I was exhausted from the day's hike. I always felt safe.

Topic Question 2:

Crowding in the lower Yosemite. We were fortunate, in that we were travelling without a vehicle (used all public transportation to get there). But at the end of our trip, we had to wait 3 1/2 hours to get a bus back to Merced to catch Amtrak. The shuttle service around lower Yosemite is good, but there is sparse service in and out of the park itself. Need more options and perhaps restrictions on automobiles (info on line letting people know when the part can't accommodate any more people, electronic signage far away from the Park that tells people how long the wait to get in might be by car).

Fire which is not controllable by the park service.

Keeping the trail as wild as it is in the upper park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 113 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,10,2016 21:00:01

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: January 10, 2016

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter concerning the High Sierra Camps in Yosemite National Park in the hopes of preserving them for future generations. I had the pleasure of taking the 50 mile loop in the summer of 2015 with myself, my father, my sister, and my girlfriend, along with some family friends. This experience was one I was familiar with due to my years in the Boy Scouts of America. However, the experience of backpacking was one in which my sister, girlfriend, and members of our family friends had never undertaken, let alone a trip of this length. Without the amenities and comfort the High Sierra Camps offered to us, they would have never seen the beauty of Yosemite's High Country firsthand like they have. Thanks to the experience of the trip and the knowledge they gained from the rangers and staff we met along the way, these new hikers are now avid backpackers and are planning more trips for the future. Without this first initial trip however, none of this would have come to pass.

The High Sierra Camps are a vital resource to the community that comes to Yosemite National Park. Due to the life-changing experiences people undergo, they find a passion for the woods and this special place that people who have been hikers all their life have. It is an incredibly unique place that actually helps preserve the National Park for future generations by generating interest in this land and inspiring people to do what they can to make others visit this one-of-a-kind landscape. I beg you, allow the High Sierra Camps to stay open and continue to operate as they have for generations: inspiring respect and admiration for the Park we all love. Thank you for your time and if you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the below address.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 114 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,11,2016 09:12:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the park service management of the wild spaces. I value that the park service has resisted the commercialization of the park and for the most part has maintained the trail system and has done a excellent job on maintaining the back-country as a wild area for generations to come.

Topic Question 2:

Overuse and crowding are my main issues of importance. I have been hiking in the Yosemite Wilderness for many years and generally have had favorable experiences. Last year I did the JMT from South to North (Tuolumne Meadows) in July and found the trail to be overly crowded. I blame the influx on uncontrolled north bound PCT hikers. The park's system of issuing back country permits seems very responsible and does a fair job of keeping the numbers to a manageable level but the PCT hikers are not part of that quota system. It seemed that at least half of the hikers I encountered were PCT north bounders. I believe the national park system (and surrounding jurisdictions) can no longer just ignore the influx of PCT hikers when the numbers are swelling into the thousands. How can you justify your wilderness permit system of letting just a trickle of hikers in over Donahue pass when you have thousands of uncontrolled hikers entering the Yosemite wilderness with PCT permits?

Comments: I have hiked 100's of miles in Yosemite park including the JMT on 3 occasions and have found the park personnel to be friendly and helpful. I have found the back country permit system to be fairly justifiable and straight forward. For the more sought after trails such as the JMT I found it rather hit and miss. I am wondering if maybe a lottery or other method would be more fair on how and to whom the permits are issued. No matter what system is incorporated for issuing wilderness permits the influx of PCT hikers must be addressed. The number of PCT hikers used to be in the low hundreds and they were mostly done hiking through the southern sierra's by the beginning of July but that has changed. With the increasing number of hikers the PCT permit issuing agency now has set a limit of 50 per day that can start at the Mexican border. This spreads out the hikers on the trail which is a good thing for the PCT but not so good for the hikers doing short hikes (or the JMT) in the southern sierra's. Hundreds of PCT hikers are now entering the southern sierra's in July and August which also coincides with the peak of none PCT hikers. The National park's quota system for entering wilderness areas is being superseded by hundreds of PCT hikers a day for almost the complete hiker season. The PCT hikers must somehow be incorporated into the quota system in a fair and equitable way. What are the solutions? 1. Limit the number of PCT hikers. This has been done already with the 50 per day limit at the border but not at the sierra's. 2. Make PCT hikers get a separate sierra permit. 3. Limit the number of PCT hikers that enter the southern sierra's after a certain date. 4. Spread the PCT hikers out to different less used trails. 5. Limit the total number of PCT permits per year and reduce the 50 a day start quota to a lesser number.

Sooner or later this has to be addressed. The huge increase in PCT hikers is not only taxing the wilderness of Yosemite but all of the other wilderness area's as well. I know not all the hikers that start at the Mexican border make it to Kennedy Meadows and complete the trail but from my experience, last summer, it is definitely getting way more crowded. The wilderness quota system which in the past has done a fairly good job of limiting the crowds is now a joke when thousands of PCT hikers are allowed in without any limitations.

Pack animals on the trail are not an issue to me. I see that there is a need for them in supplying trail crews, for providing a living for a bygone group of individuals and on a historical basis. The current limitations on pack animal use seem to be working. My only gripe would be that they make a more substantial contribution to trail maintenance since horses do way more trail damage than a person on foot.

Hiking in all the wilderness area's of the sierra's is and has always been one of the most relaxing and joyful experiences I can encounter. My hope is that it stays that way. I believe the national park system as stewards of the wilderness have been doing a pretty good job of maintaining the wild spaces in which they are in control. Their dedication may at times be at odds with the ever demanding need for more and more people to access these lands but I know there has to be a balance.

Correspondence ID: 115 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,11,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think this is one of the most challenging units to manage. Its popularity, location, and services make it an ideal getaway for countless citizens. However, as we know, that comes with a price.

Thus, limits should be considered. However, those limits should apply to the front-country services. While a few backcountry locales are heavily impacted, most are not. I think it remains a vital issue for the NPS to maintain mutually beneficial relationships with commercial guiding and related vendors.

These groups help educate, preserve and maintain the seldom seen and rarely experienced corners of the park.

I would very much want to see these relationships unchanged.

Topic Question 2:

Valley visitors.

There needs to be a balance created. How? I'm not sure, but it's the most vital issue in my opinion. Reducing camping options? Increasing costs during high visitation periods? A daily quota on cars admitted?

It's a challenge, to be sure.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 116 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,11,2016 17:32:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate the value that the NPS puts on the historical significant of the natural beauty, as well as the how people have interacted with the wilderness in the past. The Sierra Camps is a great example of how people can respectfully interact with the amazing space we call Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

Keeping it special for all to enjoy.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 117 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 09:10:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The High Sierra Camps are an amazing way to allow people - like me and my family - to experience an environment that is normally available only to experienced backpackers and campers. We came away from our Ranger-guided hike feeling peaceful, rejuvenated and committed to maintaining this experience and the public lands that are part of our National Parks for us and for others to explore for the future. Believe me, for us this was a true wilderness experience because we had never been in a place where no cars or motorized vehicles were allowed. The quiet and the untouched nature were truly wonderful.

Topic Question 2:

Maintain the High Sierra Camps as potential wilderness additions and allow the current hikes to continue! Of course, we should also manage the numbers of participants and the manner in which supplies are provided to protect the natural beauty and flora and fauna of the area. This is so important, particularly as more and more people move to cities and will be unable to participate in wilderness activities that require more wilderness skills and knowledge.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 118 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 10:25:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please continue to offer the opportunity for commercially guided backpacks and hikes. For some this is the best most safest way to experience a back country adventure. Guides offer education on LNT, human and natural history interpretation and public lands preservation. And, they keep their people safe. Guides are wilderness stewards and help develop their guests into stewards as well. Thank you. DMC

Correspondence ID: 119 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Last year was my first trip to the High Sierra camps and I thought it was fantastic and therefore would hope that the system continues. The only problem I had was the online registration form because I wanted to do a trip on my own to all the camps and it was difficult to enter that information in the form, so I ended up getting a guided trip to all but two of the camps. I don't want to see the closure of the camps. Everyone should have an opportunity to be able to do this wonderful trip, but it would be nice if the registration system was a bit easier to work with.

Topic Question 2:

189 Ridge Rock Road

So many people want to go there and we should all be able to as American citizens. One of the ways to help is limit the permits given to foreign visitors so that our own citizens can take advantage of this wonderful area. I know that might sound unAmerican but after all this is an American resource and so many residents do not get a permit because they are all given out. I also think that even though I don't have any facts, it seems that California residents are awarded permits more often than other state residents.

Comments: Please don't do away with the High Sierra camp experience. It was one of the best I have ever had and would do it every year if I could get a permit. This experience should be available to every US citizen who wants to take advantage of it. I think the permit system is the only way, but it could be a bit easier to navigate since you can only get involved with the online system.

Correspondence ID: 120 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 12:27:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

We hiked the High Sierra Camps Loop this past July. My wife and I are in our early 60s and just now have the time and disposable income to take such a trip. The availability of the camps made it possible for us. We are fit and hike a lot, but carrying a 20lb backpack vs. a 45-55lb backpack made it doable for us. The experience was incredible and we learned a tremendous amount from the rangers, the other hikers and those that manage the camps. Sadly we understand they are under threat of being closed or greatly downsized with this new plan. That would be a huge mistake for the US citizens that, in the end, pay for maintaining these special lands. Everyone capable of hiking a dozen miles with serious elevation gains and losses should have the opportunity to experience them, not just those that are in the prime of their life. During our trip we met folks ranging in age from a 13 year old boy to an 80 year old man... and many women of all ages. Keep them open!

Topic Question 2:

I only visit the valley in the winter. If there was a way to restrict the amount of people and their impact of the summer zoo that would be great, but I suppose that's unrealistic.

Comments: Please keep those High Sierra Loop camps open, there impact is minimal and the opportunity they afford the citizens to understand what wilderness is all about (and its importance) is monumental.

Correspondence ID: 121 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 13:37:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I know the Park Service has a difficult juggling act to do balancing the needs and demands of a variety of constituencies. My experience in Yosemite this past summer showed me how effectively you have managed to make one section of the park readily available to the general public while preserving a large section that most of the public never sees in a far more natural condition. Compared to my experience of Yellowstone, which seemed as though far more of the park was "developed" in the interests of tourism. You provided me an unequalled opportunity to see the High Sierras as God made them. I know you

had to make compromises in order to get people to be able to go and stay there but they were more than worthwhile.

Topic Question 2:

As with any government funded operation, money is one issue and the compromises that it may force. Since fewer people pay to use the High Sierra camps they are not the revenue producer that, I'm sure, the falls may be. In addition, the problem of supporting the camps while retaining their, if not untouched, then at least, less touched nature is clearly problematic. The pressure to develop more of the backcountry to increase tourism while retaining the wilderness that attracts people in the first place must be a herculean task. The weight of this one man's opinion is squarely on the side of resisting such development as long as possible for there are thousands of places people can go to see what man has done to his environment but precious few where we can see nature as it was left without the imprint of man.

Comments: I don't know if it is of any value to you to hear from someone as far away as New Jersey. Perhaps there may be a feeling that I should have less influence on your decisions. On the other hand, I come from the most densely populated state in the union and we need, we must, preserve the kinds of spaces you work for everyday. Such spots become rarer each and every day as miles of rainforest are destroyed, coastline is developed, oil is drilled for and mines are dug. You need to be the standard bearer for those of us who are not as near the front lines in the battle to save the planet, even if it is only a small part of that planet. Be the knight errant, the Don Quixote for those of us who cannot tilt at the windmills of developers, government, funding, bureaucracy and special interests. Perhaps these letters can provide another bit of armor or a weapon you can use to preserve what can so easily be taken away.

Correspondence ID: 122 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 15:16:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I believe the value of Yosemite is that it links us to the past through its diverse landscape, climate and the remaining wilderness that at one time was present throughout the Sierra's. The park management's goals of returning it to its original state along with provide access to all who want to visit is a herculean task. My family and I have twice visited the park and both visited the main valley along with ventured out into the back country on 2 five day High Sierra loop trips. I prefer the back country to the crowds of Yosemite Village, but understand that to open up the park to "all comers" requires the ability to provide a positive experience to people. My dealing with park employees have been with a diverse mix of people all dedicated to providing a wonderful visit along with making sure the park will be able to keep providing that same experience for future generations. I value the the idea that the future must not be squandered for the present and I think the present management is right on in this goal!

Topic Question 2:

Most important goal is allowing the Yosemite experience to be just that. It's different for every person that sets foot in the park depending on their abilities and wants. The goal to keep Yosemite as near a pristine wilderness as possible and still allow the access we have now is a 24/7/365 challenge that doesn't even address any future threat to either the wilderness or the NPS.

Comments: My 2 visits to Yosemite have consisted of twice doing the 5-day High Sierra loop trips (once guided and once unguided) with my family. Both trips brought together my 2 sons an I along with my wife on one and brother-in-law on the other. 5 days without the distractions of modern life in the beautiful settings inside Yosemite are much more relaxing then any cruise or other vacation I have ever been on. The camps, their staff and the the other people on the trails we walked reminded me of what is missing from day to day life. Face to face interaction with a broad swath of people from various locals and backgrounds. Real conversations, not just distant electronic communication.

The NPS ranger (James McGrew) that led our guided trip enhanced the hike through his love and intimate knowledge of Yosemite and its history. The ecosystem of Yosemite is amazing in its diversity and how some little changes can cause major disruptions in a place that has been around for eons. I have recommended the Loop trail hikes to many people and feel that anyone at any hiking experience level would benefit by participating in one. Their original intent to introduce people to the wonders of Yosemite is still as important today as when they were originally started. These trips are also a great way for less experienced hikers to get away from the parking lots and crowds and experience the richness and vastness that is Yosemite!

Correspondence ID: 123 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 16:33:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear park management, Please include my comments as input for the Wilderness Stewardship Plan. As a regular visitor to the park for most of my life, I have hiked a majority of the back country trails on backpacking trips and completed the John Muir Trail. For many years I have been concerned about the degradation of the trail system caused by equine usage. While I support the need to utilize equine services for trail work, I do not believe the mounted patrol needs to continue. Rangers on foot have better opportunity to "connect" with park visitors. We must realize the environmental degradation caused by equine service and phase them out. The cost to an overused park is too severe. I also believe the High Sierra Camps that are serviced by them, should not be. They cause extreme stress and wear to the trails and surrounding environment. If these camps cannot exist without equine support then maybe it is time to phase them out as well.

Please consider taking action on these changes.

Correspondence ID: 124 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 18:03:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The High Sierra Loop and the camps are the trip of a life time. They enable a wider demographic to hike. In other words, a well conditioned 70 year old can explore the area with a lighter pack. While this probably increases the traffic, I submit that we are a very respectful crowd that treats the trail with the care it deserves.

Topic Question 2:

The sorry state of affairs in Washington,DC that limits the Park Service budgets.

Comments: The ranger guided hikes are a unique opportunity to explore and learn. Please expand them.

Correspondence ID: 125 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 18:58:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The High Sierra Camps.

Topic Question 2:
Concern about closing or reducing the number of available tents at the High Sierra Camps.

Comments: My wife Debbie and myself participated on a Ranger Guided hike with Ranger James McGrew in July 2014 where we spent the night at Sunrise, Merced Lake & Vogelsang High Sierra Camps over 5 days. The scenery was breathtaking and the location of Merced Lake Camp in particular allowed our 50 something year old selves to experience the backcountry. Please allow plenty of tents to remain in these camps.

Correspondence ID: 126 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 19:36:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I spent 5 days in the High Sierra wilderness this summer and felt it was well managed
Why are you changing that, I have literally told hundreds of people that Yosemite has to be one of the prettiest places in America

Topic Question 2:
Manage the number of individuals, keep it on a limited basis. It's ok to have to be on a waiting list, I waited for years and will wait again hoping for another opportunity and I'm 62 years old!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 127 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 20:08:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

As a backpacker, I have spent many seasons over the years in various areas of the park. As the demands for use have increased, I have appreciated the use of trailhead quotas, even when I have been unable to hike some of my favorite places due to high demand. I also appreciate the efforts made to educate new hikers on the appropriate "leave no trace" practices. I am always glad when I can use an area which is heavily visited without there being significant trash and other left overs.

Topic Question 2:
I think the most important issue is the fact that the park is literally being loved to death. It has been years since I have gone to the Valley, since my experiences there are pretty much to opposite of what I seek when I go to the park. Too much traffic, noise, air & light pollution - pretty much the problems of urban America simply transplanted to the park. De-urbanize things by limiting the number of visitors. There are some areas which are well suited for pack animal use, where the impact on trails is less dramatic, and perhaps limiting pack to those areas makes sense. I think it's also essential to remember that while the park has wilderness, it is also surrounded by National Forest where uses limited in the park could be easily accommodated. As for the quota system, I think it would be helpful if those who had to deal with the disappointed folks had the knowledge and authority to make alternative suggestions to encourage the use of areas less impacted. I would be thrilled to have folks spread out more - when I take new packers out, the trails that work best are so overused there is very little of the wilderness experience to be had. Perhaps that's one way to discourage them from returning and filling the quotas, but it's disappointing for all involved. If there is a way to also make sure that permits are more available closer to the dates of use (lottery?), you could still get the \$ for the permit, and folks who can't plan a year in advance could have a fine trip too.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 128 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,12,2016 21:53:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The High Sierra Camps.

They embody the National Park Service and keep John Muir's vision alive in future generations of conservationists and environmentalists.

I respect those who argue that the High Sierra Camps should be managed and added to the true wilderness. However, what I think is lost is the inspiration that these camps provide for those that otherwise would not be able or willing to go into the wilderness or travel to the Camps for their first foray into the wild. The Camps awe those who share the experience. These are the same people that ultimately support wilderness preservation and the National Park Service. The loss of the camps would be a travesty. The High Sierra Camps are a very special place in the crown jewel of the National Park Service.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 129 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 00:55:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I would like to see the use of stock eliminated or greatly reduced. We need to provide access to our wilderness to as many people as we can. Sock users are a small minority of highly privileged individuals and they cause a disproportionate amount of damage to the environment. I would hope that we can increase the number of people allowed in the wilderness by increasing trail quotas and the construction of new trails. Only people that can enjoy the wilderness are willing to protect it. I would also propose the installation of solar composting toilets to minimize the impact of human waste. With

an ever growing population in California we need to increase access to our national parks so future generations can enjoy them the same as past generations.

Correspondence ID: 130 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would like to see the use of stock eliminated or greatly reduced. We need to provide access to our wilderness to as many people as we can. Stock users are a small minority of highly privileged individuals and they cause a disproportionate amount of damage to the environment. I would hope that we can increase the number of people allowed in the wilderness by increasing trail quotas and the construction of new trails. Only people that can enjoy the wilderness are willing to protect it. I would also propose the installation of solar composting toilets to minimize the impact of human waste. With an ever growing population in California we need to increase access to our national parks so future generations can enjoy them the same as past generations.

Correspondence ID: 131 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
see below

Topic Question 2:
see below

Comments: SIERRA CLUB COMMENTS ON YOSEMITE WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Visitor Use and Capacity

The Wilderness permit system should be fully coordinated with the other adjacent National Forests to create one system for the entire Southern Sierra. NPS should encourage the use of the less used trailheads. The system should balance the interests of through hikers and other users. The system must be designed to limit the impact on the natural resources of the Park.

Commercial Services

NPS should analyze the effect that all commercial services have on the natural resources of the Park and determine whether there should be a limit on the number and extent of permitted commercial services to reduce the impact on the natural resources and other wilderness users. The biggest impact is probably from commercial packers because of their stock use and smaller party size limits should be considered. The obvious impacts of the High Sierra Camps on wilderness values should be examined and at least a reduction in their services should be considered.

Stock Use

The overall impact of stock use must be examined to determine how its impacts on the natural resources can be reduced or eliminated. Stock use in certain fragile areas, such as high elevation meadows, should be prohibited. Stock users should be required to take measures to reduce manure on trails and at campsites.

Trails

NPS should continue to adjust the trail system to use patterns, adding new trails if necessary, eliminating unused trails, and providing proper maintenance.

Campfires

NPS should consider banning all campfires in wilderness. They are not necessary for cooking, cause air pollution, increase wildfire risk, and damage the natural resource through fire rings.

Potential Wilderness

NPS should endeavor to incorporate all eligible potential wilderness into their management as wilderness.

Wilderness Education

NPS should prioritize positive wilderness education to Yosemite users, and publicize/promote some short family-friendly wilderness hikes to allow a broad range of wilderness experience.

Wilderness Commercial Overflights

NPS should consider opposition to commercial wilderness overflights for sightseeing purposes - - such as at Grand Canyon.

Drones

Drones and similar electronic or mechanical devices should be banned

Fees

NPS should keep wilderness visits fee-free. (Advance reservation fees are an acceptable exception.) We realize wilderness, like anything else, does not come free, but wilderness is a common value, a common good, like public education, which is not paid for on the basis of user fees. A fee on a wilderness visit would be a trammeling action, and any attempt at justification would need to show that all other aspects of wilderness character are increased by the fee.

Tools for Trail Maintenance

Trails should be maintained except in most extreme emergencies by hand tools and not mechanized tools. Adjacent wildernesses under Forest Service management have set a good example for this.

Correspondence ID: 132 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 11:20:40

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think the current plan is sound and does not need to be substantially changed. I have been coming to the park for sixty years and it has served us well. It is important to make sure the fit elderly still have access to the wilderness. I think the high sierra camps and livestock are an important part of the Yosemite wilderness experience and should continue to exist

Topic Question 2:

Cell phones are important emergency tools. I think it should be possible to use solar technology and have better coverage without major negative impacts on the wilderness areas.

Comments: Be very careful not to mess up a successful operation just because you can do it.

Correspondence ID: 133 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 13:49:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
N/A

Topic Question 2:

N/A

Comments: I'd like to comment on the proposed changes to guided backpacking tours in Yosemite.

I'll be travelling from Melbourne to Yosemite in June and to have a guided backpacking tour available in Yosemite is priceless. I don't need to be concerned with taking gear, or knowing the area which is incredibly valuable when travelling to the other side of the world.

I would hope you continue to allow backpacking tour operators to function in all areas of Yosemite as this allows people like myself to experience the Yosemite backcountry.

Thanks.

Correspondence ID: 134 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 14:16:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Currently, the park service allows both guided and non-guided access to the Park. Apropos of this survey, I am planning my first trip to the Park this summer through the service of an outfitter. If the Park Service eliminates the opportunity for me to join a guided trip, as an older single female citizen, I would never experience its glory. I have gone backpacking with a particular outfitter previously, and through their experience provided education, safety, and enjoyment for their guests, and extended stewardship of our precious national parks. Additionally, with their knowledge I saw areas of another National Park which I would have never had the luxury to explore. While all National Parks should be protected for generations, with careful oversight all citizens should have the opportunity to see all areas of our lands. It seems to be a right for all American citizens.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 135 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 14:16:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the current plan of Guide Services to fully enjoy the various area of the park. it is an awesome park with the ability to go from easy to very difficult camping and hiking adventures.

Topic Question 2:

keeping options open for everyone to enjoy the park. having guide services is extremely important to me. they know the terrain, rules, difficulty, water availability, wildlife, flora.

Comments: I want to rely to you the importance of guide services. I have backpacked in several National parks and almost always use a guide service. they are invaluable to me as I would not have the knowledge to see some of the great areas of the park without them. the one thing I am extremely impressed with is their passion to keep the parks pristine with minimal impact so future generations can enjoy the parks.

With the guide services I think a there are many more people that have the opportunity to see the splendor and majesty of these parks.

Again I will emphasize how much more I enjoy and learn with guide services.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 136 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 14:17:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I experienced Yosemite National Park for the first time in 2014 through a guided tour group (Wildland Trekking). It was a wonderful way to experience and learn about back country/wilderness hiking and camping. Our guide kept us safe, ensured that we had the proper equipment for technical climbs (such

as half dome) and made sure that we always obeyed trail and park regulations. I believe that this was a wonderful way to experience the park - optimal for visitors, wildlife, and park management. Guided tour groups such as Wildland Trekking should have access to provide safe, guided tours in the future - as much as

Topic Question 2:

Stewardship of wilderness areas and wildlife, preservation for future generations, prevention of man-made forest or brush fires, water management. Also safety for park visitors - which are usually in harm's way due to their own fault (coming into the backcountry unprepared, with inadequate food, shelter, footwear). I think tour groups can help prepare visitors, ensuring they have proper gear and behave appropriately. For self-guided visitors I assume it is more difficult to regulate - Perhaps make solo campers take a pledge to protect wilderness or sign a waiver that they won't act in a reckless or destructive manner?

Comments: Guided tour groups are a wonderful way to experience the wilderness in Yosemite. If anything I think that they are safer and ensure protection of the environment and of the wildlife - any tour guide worth anything will educate group members and help foster a safe experience for all (humans and wildlife - and the park management that are charged with protecting both groups!).

Correspondence ID: 137 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,13,2016 14:23:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS manages the wilderness by allowing limited access to hikers and backpackers. This minimises the human impact on the environment but enables people to experience the wonders of the back country.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue for the NPS is recognising the impact of climate change on the overall ecosystem of Yosemite. Plus balancing the needs of the changing environment and the desire of people to experience the wilderness. People who visit the wilderness gain direct experience of the importance of protecting the environment and then like us they can be some of the most impassioned advocates of protecting the Yosemite wilderness.

Comments: We have visited Yosemite five times over the past twenty years and it keeps pulling us back. We have hiked nearly all the self guided day hikes in and around the valley. But to experience the back country we took a guided hike last summer into the backcountry from Tuolumne Meadows to Young Lakes and climbed Mount Conness. Despite our considerable hiking experience and knowledge of the park we would not have felt confident to tackle this without a guide. Our guides ensured we were safe, educated us about protecting the wilderness and added considerably to our enjoyment on a truly memorable trek.

We think it is important that you continue to allow equal access to guided and non-guided hikers to the wilderness to enable people like ourselves to experience the wonders of the backcountry.

Correspondence ID: 138 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,13,2016 14:38:23

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think allowing guided tours in the Park Back Country is a very important way to allow those of us with the ability, but not as much experience to see this incredible natural wonder. I've done quite a bit of hiking including the parts of the Appalachian Trail, Philmont with the Boy Scouts as well as a couple other guided hikes. I have the ability, but the thought of hiking Yosemite by myself, providing all the equipment and logistics from my home in Ohio would honestly be quite impossible. The guided tours provide the support, logistics and safety net. Without it, you would limit hikers in the back country to a small cadre of experienced hikers, or people who maybe shouldn't be out there by themselves.

Comments: I am 52 years old, not as young as I once was, hopefully a little smarter. As I mentioned above, I'm from the flatlands of Ohio. I worked very hard to get in shape for our 25 mile hike from Tenaya Lake to Yosemite Village. Nothing can prepare you for the thin air at Clouds rest. It was brutal, I was whipped several times on our 4 day hike but I wouldn't trade it for anything. Yosemite actually exceeded my expectations, which given Yosemite's reputation is saying something. I wouldn't have done this trip without the guides. I'm not sure I could have managed the process, but I'm also certain, given my limited knowledge, I would have judged the potential risk as too high. Most others in the guided trips I've been on are using the guides for the same reasons. In the end, you still have to hike, the guides help you get there. Without this, I believe you limit access to a pretty small and I say in not a good way "elite" group. People like me wouldn't stand a chance of seeing the great things I saw.

Correspondence ID: 139 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,13,2016 14:38:27

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The pristine condition of the park

Comments: It was brought to my attention that changes may be made to who and how the wilderness may be accessed. Last summer, I took a guided backpacking trip through Yosemite. It was one of the most impactful trips of my life. To be able to get off the well-worn path and experience the true beauty of this national park has left a lasting change in me.

While I envy those who have the skills and experience to survive on their own, I could never have experienced the backwoods without the expertise of our guide. Therefore, I strongly believe guide companies serve an important purpose in our exploration and understanding of the parks. They give accessibility the average layperson would not have to experience the park. I learned so much about Yosemite during my trip yet felt safe being in the wilderness because of them. It would be a shame to limit their exposure, access or otherwise because they provide an invaluable service. Not to mention, the guides took the stewardship very seriously. Not only did they look after the group to ensure that we followed all of the laws (leave no trace, use your bear container, don't remove anything from the forest), I also saw several instances of them "policing" unguided backpackers as well.

I hope you will consider these comments when making new policies that may limit the access or number of trips guide companies can take. That would be a disservice to us all. thanks.

Correspondence ID: 140 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 14:48:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

1) The fact that the National Park system is open for all to use and enjoy.
2) The senior pass that gives a discounted admission to all National Parks
3) The ability to hire a guide. I am 66 years old and very fit and an experienced hiker and camper but I am hesitant to set off on a wilderness hike at a National Park without a guide. I am experienced enough to know the back country can be dangerous, with that being said I am not ready to confine my hikes to wheelchair accessible trails.

Topic Question 2:

1) Overuse and overcrowding
2) Uncontrolled fires
3) Erosion
4) Trail construction and maintenance.
5) Public service; interpretive ranger talks and rescue of lost or injured.
6) Wildlife protection and maintenance.

Comments: Since turning 64 I have taken two, week long hiking and camping trips in or near National Parks or wilderness areas. Since these trips were in remote areas where I was unfamiliar the hazards, I found it prudent to book a guide for each of these trips. Without the guides I would have seen far less on these magnificent areas.

I am a geologist and can read a map as well as anyone but having a guide along who has first hand knowledge of the area and the specific trails was invaluable, this allowed me to see areas far removed from the wheelchair accessible overlooks.

Some time in the future I may be unable to pursue the type of hiking and camping that I do now, but until that time comes I want to participate in life as fully as I possibly can.

Because I have been able to take guided hiking and camping trips I have been able to see first hand Havasupi Falls, the Grand Canyon NP, Bryce and Zion National Parks, and the Escalante wilderness.

Both recent trips were with The WildLand Trekking Company and they were done in a very professional manner they should definitely remain on the approved contractor list.

When I was younger I took a couple of guided hiking trips in Katmai NP & up the valley of ten thousand smokes in Alaska. Some one from the lower 48 would be a fool to set off on such trips without a guide.

By allowing guide services to operate in the National Parks the accessibility of these remote areas is increase. These areas were intended by congress to be for all citizen to use, not just the young and the foolish.

In conclusion if any changes are made the guide services should be expanded.

Correspondence ID: 141 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 14:57:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I found that the trails and backcountry camp sites were clean and adequate. The trails were fairly well marked.

Comments: I understand that the park is considering eliminating guided tours through the backcountry. I whole-heartedly believe that would be a mistake. As inexperienced backpackers, my wife and I were able to see the backcountry of one of the nation's most beautiful parks with the aid of a guide.

Not only did we feel safer, as the guide was familiar with the trails and park as a whole, but we also learned much more about the park in terms of wildlife, plants/trees, weather, and history than we would have had we gone alone. The guide also enforced park rules and ensured that we had minimal impact on the environment.

Without the help of a guide, we most likely would not have attempted our three night stay in the backcountry of Yosemite as the thought of going alone was somewhat daunting. Having been afforded the opportunity to do so has left us with a lasting memory and a deep respect for the park.

Correspondence ID: 142 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 15:08:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I like the affordability of the park and that it is open to everyone.

Topic Question 2:

I would say forest fires are a concern for our national forests.

Comments: I took a guided tour in August of 2015. I have never camped or back packed ever in my life where I slept outside. I planned a trip within a couple of months, by setting myself and my 14 year old son on a guided tour of the Yosemite High Sierra Trail. It was an experience of a life time for both of us. Our Guide took us for 4 days through Yosemite and we back packed the entire time. It was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life, but also the most rewarding. Our Guide showed us how to setup our packs, our tent, and what rules we needed to follow while in the park. I could not have done this trip by myself.

Correspondence ID: 143 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 15:58:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The access to the park as private citizens and the guided trips available through outfitters and guides. I am 72 years old and been a backpacker my entire adult life. By my mid 60's I was no longer able to do the solo back packing trips. Outfitters and their guides have allowed me to continued back packing of the national parks. During this time I have safely trekked the Grand Canyon hiking and rafting the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, Zion, Bryce, The Grand Staircase, Escalante, Denali, Yellowstone, Canyonlands, and am signed up to trek Yosemite in June of this year. Had it not been for the outfitters, I would have had none of these opportunities.

Topic Question 2:

Accessibility to the park. For people of my age outfitters and their guides are the only option to get to the place we want visit. We should have equal access with the non-guided general public and be allowed to trek the same places in the back country. Limiting the Outfitters and their guide to a restricted number of opportunities to access the park and areas of the park is discriminating against those of us who would be shut out of using the park if were not for their services.

Additionally, It is my experience that outfitters are the most responsible and effective preservationists of our natural habitats. Compared to the general population they are by far the best managers and stewards for leading park users with best practices for the habitats and wildlife as we our natural resources with them

Comments: Over the last 25 years I have witnessed the erosion of acceptable behavior by the general public turning the park service into enforcement officers and traffic cops. My experience is that Outfitters and their guides are the most responsible users of our national park resources. Frankly, after trekking 9 national parks in as many years with Outfitters and their guides I believe the park service would be well served to use their services to assure and regulate access to standardize back country decorum safety to assure the next generations have the opportunities my generation has had.

I am one of your biggest supporters. My first visit was to Yellowstone at age 3 in 1947 thanks to my parents love of the national parks. My family of origin, my offspring and their children, my grand children share the love of the parks and are your regular visitors. The opportunities the parks offer better our lives, educate us and create respect for the park's need to balance access and preservation.

I understand the challenges you face in managing access to the parks. I would hope you do not allow yourselves to shut out the aging demographics by limiting the outfitters and their guided that make it possible for older Americans to continue their love affair with the National Parks.

Correspondence ID: 144 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 16:07:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The ability to access well maintained hiking trails and camp sites in the most scenic and remote portions of the park.

Topic Question 2:

1) fires intruding into the park from surrounding areas, as has occurred in recent years. (2) Deferred maintenance. (3) Need for more rangers and other park staff. (4) Higher fees. It is ridiculously inexpensive to enter a national park. I don't know how the park can be adequately maintained for the small price of admission.

Comments: During the past 4 years my wife and I have gone on 3 guided backpacking trips in national parks and wilderness areas. Two have been in Grand Canyon National Park with the Wildland Trekking Company (4 and 5 day trips) and a 6 day trip with Sierra Mountain Center, which included a Whitney ascent. Although we have our own tent, sleeping bags and packs, we prefer guided trips because the guides are trained and experienced in wilderness ethics, along with being EMTs. Group size is limited to 5 guests to minimize impacts. The guides know and interpret the local flora, fauna and geology for their guests, and impart important lessons about wilderness stewardship. This means that the guest will be well versed in the principles of proper care for the wilderness when they venture out on their own. In addition, companies like Wildland Trekking contribute a portion of their proceeds to wilderness and outdoor organizations. Another thing we like about Wildland Trekking is they that send each guest a detailed packet describing the appropriate gear to bring and the recommended training regimen to ensure the guest can comfortably complete the trek. The guide also calls 2 weeks before the trip to make sure the guest is fully prepared. We have been doing long day hikes in the Sierras and throughout the west for about 20 years. Over that span we've seen too many people on the trails who are not in shape and lack adequate food, water and equipment. Allowing companies like Wildland Trekking and Sierra Mountain Center to lead guided trips greatly reduces the likelihood of unprepared hikers and backpackers. We value the service and experience provided by Wildland so much that this year we are taking a 3rd backpacking trip in April, followed by a 4-day trip in the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne in July and a 7-day trip in Yosemite's Cathedral Range in August. I doubt we'd have the confidence to do these trips on our own if reputable companies like Wildland Trekking and Sierra Mountain Center no longer had the access to Yosemite and other national parks that they currently enjoy. Please preserve the ability, without any geographic restrictions, for guiding companies to expose the wonders of Yosemite to many people who would otherwise not visit this wonderful park.

Correspondence ID: 145 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 16:23:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Our family has joined several guided trips in the US: Grand Canyon back-country and more recently a guided trip in Yosemite. We valued the knowledge that the guide brought to the experience and the reduction in risk to us in taking on such an adventure and the guidance we received in minimizing the impact of our presence on nature in the outback. We believe that guided visitors and non-guided visitors should have equal access to the Yosemite back-country. And we believe that guide companies shouldn't be limited in the places they can take guests or the number of trips they can run, if they are operating competently.

From our experiences, guide companies provide education, safety and enjoyment for guests like us and stewardship of precious national parks.

We can't say enough good about our experiences with one particular guide company (Wildland Trekking). They were recommended to us and our experiences have been excellent. We have recommended them to friends, who have also gone on trips with them and enjoyed the experience as well.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 146 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 16:35:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

YNP is my favorite place. When I lived in CA I would visit YNP at least 6 times a year. Since I moved to the east coast I have visited YNP several times and each time with a guided tour - - Backroads and Wildland Trekking. I have thoroughly enjoyed my hikes more with a guided tour. I learned so much about the history of YNP as we were on our hikes and I never worried about getting lost and I knew I was safe. I'm planning on coming back this year with Wildland Trekking. The guides are very knowledgeable and teach us about the importance of the wild life in the park. If you stop guided tours you're going to make a big mistake. I know there are many who feel the same way, yet...I don't know if they will bring their concern to your attention. Guided visitors and non-guided visitors should have equal access to YNP's backcountry. Guide companies should not be limited in the places they can take guests or the number of trips they can run. They bring income to the park-we buy souvenirs, food, etc.

Topic Question 2:

People need to understand how dangerous the wild life can be and to leave the wild life alone and what to do if they come in contact with wild life. When you're on a guided trip you are well aware of all of these items.

Comments: I ask you to please allow guided tours into YNP. If you put an end to this, it would be a huge loss.

Correspondence ID: 147 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 16:45:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would like to comment on my trip last year. I was able to participate in a 4 day, 3 night guided hiking trip. Since I am not a regular hiker, this is an excellent way for me to experience and enjoy our National Parks. The guided tour provided training, education and safety throughout the trip. I also had the opportunity to meet others and work together to complete something that would be a challenge by myself. A good example, was the climb of half dome. Our guide spent a lot of time discussing how we needed to safely climb up and back down. This along with a group of others to encourage me, helped me successfully complete the hike.

I enjoyed the hiking experience and wanted to say thanks for allowing guided tours of this beautiful area.

Correspondence ID: 148 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 16:51:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It is accessible and well-managed, even with the extremely large number of visitors. It is appropriately "commercialized" in that services are available for individuals whether they are seeking an extreme wilderness experience or seeing the beauty of the outdoors without great labor and work.

Topic Question 2:

1. water
2. crowds
3. pressure groups
4. decreasing federal funding
5. aging infrastructure
6. changing weather and climate

Comments: I plan to hike Half Dome this summer and have secured the services of a commercial guide. I secured the professional services because I have never hiked Half Dome before and I want to learn as much as possible through the experience. I want to learn about the history, the geology, the animal life, and the plant life. Without a doubt I could follow the crowd to the top, but I could not learn all that I hope to learn with the services of a professional guide.

Requiring a guide would be as wrong as banning professional guides from the park. I should be the individuals choice as to whether one contracts with a guide service, reads books about the hikes or just goes on his/her own.

Correspondence ID: 149 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 17:52:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It keeps it wild and makes it available to the general public.

Topic Question 2:

Not sure

Comments: I just wanted to express my concerns about using guides in the Yosemite Park. Because of them I am able to hike safely knowing I am in the hands of a trained professional. Without the guides, I would not attempt to backpack in Yosemite with my daughter. Their value to the novice hiker, you cannot put a price on that. They know better places to hike, they teach you about the wilderness and sincerely appreciate what the outdoors have to offer with a lot of regard to the natural habitat. If it I didn't have a guide to take me, I would have never of visited Yosemite. Besides, I'm afraid of the grizzly

bears, oh my.

Correspondence ID: 150 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 19:44:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

We value the pristine experience available in the Yosemite Wilderness despite large numbers of visitors.

Topic Question 2:

Keeping the wilderness pristine yet accessible. How to address I do not know.

Comments: Our family of five wished to have a terrific wilderness experience and chose Yosemite for its iconic features (Half Dome, El Cap, Nevada Falls, etc.). Two of us had never backpacked previously. We had a memorable, life-changing trip thanks to our guide and his knowledge and care for us and for the wilderness. We hope others will be as fortunate.

We understand the NPS may be considering restriction of guided trips in Yosemite. We feel the wilderness would have been inaccessible to us without our guide. Or, had we attempted the trip into the backcountry without him, the trip might have been unsafe.

We think our guide's input made us more appreciative of Yosemite and the need to preserve it. We abided by the letter and spirit of all regulations, while some of the other groups we encountered did not (camping too close to streams, etc.).

Our guide assured our safety, educated us with each step, and gave us a sense of gratitude for the Yosemite wilderness and the need to preserve it. We would not have taken the trip otherwise and would be that much poorer for the lack of the experience. (Or we might have taken the trip and attempted more than was advisable for us - or worse).

Our guide provided safety, education, an experience of a lifetime in one of the world's iconic places, all while instilling in us the need to preserve this one-of-a-kind place.

Please ensure that others are all able to access the back country through the option of guided trips on the same basis as unguided trips. Also, the guide provided proper equipment, the investment by us in which would also have made the trip unlikely.

Correspondence ID: 151 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,13,2016 23:22:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Any in which main tourist centre concentrated in valley allowing the wilderness to be maintained

Topic Question 2:

How to protect wilderness in face of climate change

Comments: I understand the park authorities are considering restricting guided trips into the valley. I am a UK national. I think that would be a shame. We previously took advantage of a guide trip in the Grand Canyon. Our guide gave us the confidence to explore that magical place in a way that would have been difficult without his expertise. His experience, commitment and advice kept us safe, helped to protect the landscape. I also feel that these kinds of livelihoods are important. Environmentally friendly jobs would be a stake. Thanks

Correspondence ID: 152 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,14,2016 01:29:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I like the access and well-maintained trails to all the trails above the village. The shuttle busses are great as well.

Comments: I first saw Yosemite in 1976 and being from Ohio, had never seen anything like it. It opened my eyes to a natural beauty and love for the mountains that has stayed with me my entire life.

Last year I returned to see Yosemite for only my second time and was able to bring along my 2 children (18 & 21) to share the experience with them. They were captivated as well.

The 3 of us came to do a first ever backpacking trip. The trip lasted 4 days. While we had camped many times over the years, we had never gone backpacking and it had always been a dream for me to try it, though I was quite intimidated by what it would require (skills, equipment, general knowledge to make such a trip successful....none of which I felt I had.

We utilized Wildland Trekking because we didn't want to get ourselves in trouble by doing it ourself (too much equipment, not enough equipment, ensure we understood what was safe and what was too risky, how to best leave a minimal impact, dealing with water, toilets, trash, etc). I want to take more backpacking trips and for at least the first few, want professionals to help me develop the knowledge and skills to "do it right".

Our experience was exceptional and personally, would consider it foolish for anyone to attempt something like we did without an experienced individual.

We learned in the parking lot before even starting, that we were intending to take far more than we needed and I shudder to think what it would have been like to have been half way up the 1st day climb to the rim with all that extra weight. At our first camp, seeing and understanding about water, food/bears, toilets, trash....it all made sense with the guide's sharing of experiences (stories), showing how things are to be done, answering questions and his general "respect" for where we were in the wilderness.

I understand you are considering some sort of limiting and stopping of commercial operations. I would urge you very much not to do this. If anything, I

would do the opposite (limit people going out on their own without professional guidance). I believe people would be far safer and the environment much more protected with the professional along.

Of course there comes a point where people don't need the professional and I have no idea how to judge this, from the perspective of management of the park...so I suppose you just have to let everyone go, but have some limits on numbers (which I think you do now). But in those limits, I feel very strongly that commercial operators must be permitted a sizable number of permits.

I don't know, but have to believe that without the commercial operators, many people who might try this once, would be squeezed out by those who backpack frequently

I do suspect there are good and not so good commercial operators and perhaps if more limits need to be put in place, it is the vetting of commercial operators.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments and I hope they are helpful in any decisions you make.

Regards,

Correspondence ID: 153 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,14,2016 01:51:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Attention to providing different levels of visitor experience/preservation of natural values.
Trail maintenance and management.

Topic Question 2:

Bear/human interactions - increased visitor supervision. No further growth of visitor facilities.

Fire management in changing climate. Use the best science available to manage environmental change and conserve natural values - fit people in later.

Comments: I have worked 40 years in fire, forestry and (mostly) park management in Victoria, Australia.

In 2015 I took the opportunity to visit Yosemite N.P. with Wildland Trekking on my first north american tour. I would never normally walk with a tour group, preferring independent travel, but it made sense to make use of a guide company for the following reasons:

1. access to back country hiking trails that I would not have had access to in my planning timeframe
2. professional guidance with issues that I would not be familiar with such as park regulations and managing bear risk.
3. educational and interpretative service from an experienced local guide. I was also interested, professionally, in how the guided experience worked.
4. access to hiking equipment that I could not bring from home and would have had to hire or buy in California.

My experience was definitely positive. The guide had a steady hand on our group and our behaviours (safety, minimal impact and attention to park reg.s), provided interpretation of the landscape and biota we were travelling through and made the trip enjoyable for all.

I also felt that our group was far more environmentally aware and caring under the stewardship of our guide than many of the self-guided groups we encountered.

I have a philosophical problem with private enterprise operating in National Parks due to pecuniary interests interfering with protection of the park, but I believe that in my case (I may have been fortunate) the guided experience gave a very good outcome for the park and the participants. As a result, I was able to visit a truly astounding natural environment, learn and understand heaps, and come away with the knowledge that I had made negligible impacts. (But a little lighter in the wallet!)

Correspondence ID: 154 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,14,2016 05:51:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Access is available for all levels of people

Topic Question 2:

Preserving the park for the future. Controlling overuse and safety

Comments: I am a single mom who has been taking my kids on treks with guide companies. I have found their expertise and experience to be an integral part of my trips. Using guides allows me and my kids to see areas of parks at an in depth level in a safe and responsible manner. Every guide company I have used has emphasized the importance of protecting our wilderness. Continuing, this is an incredible experience for my kids, one that I am unable to accomplish with out the knowledge of a guide.

Correspondence ID: 155 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,14,2016 12:24:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I appreciate how well organised things were and that there were people checking to see permits to climb to peaks, and warning tourists about possible rain.

Topic Question 2:

Not quite sure.

Comments: I mainly wanted to say how I joined a guided trip last summer going to Yosemite and it was an amazing experience. Our guide was extremely knowledgeable and respectful and full of love and awe for the park. This really enhanced my experience. Actually I probably would have not gone on the trip had I not gone on a guided trip. I would have been scared that I'd take the wrong turn and get lost in the park, or if something happened how to get help or exit the park. My guide was probably the biggest advocate towards conservation, not letting us drop an orange peel into the wilderness as it didn't belong there. I think it is REALLY important that guided visitors and non-guided visitors should have equal access to Yosemite backcountry, and that they shouldn't be limited in the number of places they can take guests or number of trips they can run. It disappoints me that a National Park like Yosemite would bring this up, as these companies and guides are your biggest advocates. They help show us the magic in the parks and feel safe as we explore. They provide an educational experience, safety and just all around an amazing experience.

Correspondence ID: 156 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,14,2016 14:07:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

As a retiree, I appreciate very much the guide service assistance, knowledge, safety training, advice, and general stewardship skills. Without the guide service, my general experience and park exposure would be greatly reduced and my enjoyment quite diminished. So, I really appreciate the ability to hire a professional guide.

Topic Question 2:

Too much development is damaging our parks all over the country. We need trash removed, good water sources, decent camping and bathrooms, and far better signage.

Comments: I love the outdoors, and as a retiree, greatly benefit from guide services of all kinds. I'm helping the economy by hiring these folks, and I pay a ton of taxes in support of our parks. So, for my wife and myself, limiting guide services is a huge negative, for those of us who pay the freight for the economy. Limiting guides only creates a more hazzardly trip for us, and anyone who wants to hear about park info from a guide, receive trail support, get ideas, enjoy the plant and wildlife, and just generally appreciate the parks.

Correspondence ID: 157 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,14,2016 14:28:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value their attempts to limit visitor use and restore trails, meadows and riparian areas, especially those impacted by stock use.

Topic Question 2:

Heavy visitor use and concentration - create destination based quotas to be used in concert with trailhead quotas

Stock Use - minimize as much as possible; eliminate

High Sierra Camps - remove these nonconforming uses and designate them as Wilderness while simultaneously eliminating a high demand for stock use

Comments: Thank you for considering these comments regarding the upcoming revision of the Yosemite wilderness management plan.

I find the presence of the High Sierra Camps to have a significantly negative effect on my wilderness experience. The increased levels of stock use on trails, and the subsequent trail degradation, due to the restocking of these camps interferes with my user experience. There should not be small, isolated pockets of non-wilderness within the Yosemite Wilderness that support "non-conforming uses" such as the High Sierra Camps. Even if the camps were to remain non-wilderness, their impact goes beyond the actual footprint of the camp due to increased human and stock traffic. Wilderness is supposed to offer solitude and a primitive experience where users rely on their own skill set. High Sierra Camps allow users who may not be able to and who do not wish to have a primitive experience to travel through and spend time surrounded by Wilderness without having an actual Wilderness experience. The presence of users who are not also engaged in having a primitive experience significantly reduces the value of my Wilderness experience. Knowing that some of the comforts of non-wilderness are nearby violates my feeling of being deep in the Wilderness. Although the footprint of "nonconforming uses" may comprise a small percent of the acre footprint of Yosemite's Wilderness, it is their location as islands of nonconforming uses surrounded by Wilderness that is problematic. Much of a Wilderness experience is being self-reliant, and having the option to not be self-reliant in an area where I would otherwise HAVE to be self-reliant, greatly diminishes my Wilderness experience.

In referring to the High Sierra Camps, the 1989 Wilderness plan clearly states that "should increased adverse impacts on adjacent wilderness environments result from the operation of existing facilities, they will be removed." I find that increasing popularity and use of Yosemite's Wilderness, including the High Sierra Camps, has increased the adverse impact on adjacent wilderness, primarily through negative impacts of stock use associated with the camps. Additionally, the increasing use of the areas around and between camps by camp users is adversely affecting the solitude that is supposed to be characteristic of Wilderness.

Trail quotas are insufficient to ensure that large groups of people are not congregating at one or two popular locations along the trail. I appreciate trail quotas limiting the number of users I encounter while on the trail, but they do not effectively prevent concentration of use at popular locations. Setting, and enforcing quotas for popular destinations as well as trail quotas would likely improve my Wilderness experience by allowing me to also visit those popular destinations without having to share it with the majority of people who hiked on that trail or in that area that day. It would also allow me to visit less popular destinations within high use zones without having to compete for permits with those visiting popular destinations.

I would like to see levels of commercial and pack stock uses decline, and definitely not increase. Encountering pack stock is always a negative experience that does not align with my vision of Wilderness. I do not view pack stock as a primitive use that is appropriate in Wilderness, so having to yield to long pack stock trains greatly diminishes my experience. Additionally, I disagree with the amount of trail damage they cause. It affects me negatively when I am hiking on a trail that has very loose soil due to pack stock use, and is dotted with piles of manure that attract flies and significantly interfere with my feeling

of natural, untrammled wilderness. While I am encouraged to leave no trace and required to properly dispose of my waste, pack stock waste remains in a place many users are sure to encounter it. Those with allergies are particularly vulnerable to the dust from both the trail and old manure. There also seems to be a high amount of overlap between trails that get heavy stock use and heavy visitor use.

Correspondence ID: 158 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,14,2016 16:40:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The value I give on the management of Yosemite Wilderness is based on personal experience. As a young child, born and raised in Northern California, I was able to frequent the Park in a pretty consistent manner. The accessibility offered by the National Park helped me to build a basic appreciation for the Park.

Last summer I had the wonderful opportunity, at the age of 71, to hike into the wilderness to the High Sierra Camps with a NPS Ranger. I would never have attempted this without the organized program managed (through a vendor) by NPS. Our Ranger besides seeing to the safety of the group assigned to him, expanded our "horizons" about the park with his broad knowledge about the Park (history of indigenous people, climate, topography, plants, animals). We were attending a "living classroom" on a daily basis. It whetted my appetite to learn more and to support all of the National Park Service's programs.

The High Sierra Camps provide a system where the movement of hikers throughout a large portion of the Yosemite Wilderness ensures a safer, controlled environment that large groups (increasing in number yearly) of men and women can pass through the park.

Something to note is that while Park Visitors, Overnight Hikers and Overnight Stays have increased (2012 to 2014), because of programs presently managed by NPS, Search and Rescue Operations and Motor Vehicle Accidents (2012-2014) have declined.

Topic Question 2:

- (1) Increasing visitors to the Park. Continue to make the High Sierra Camps and Camp facilities available to visitors, along with trail accessibility currently in place.
- (2) Control the amount of vehicular traffic in Yosemite. Increase shuttle service to all parts of Park - - Hetch Hetchy and Glacier Point and Mariposa Grove

Comments: I have read the programs you have in place, and they are impressive. I also wanted to comment on the seasonal NPS Rangers you employ. All my experiences, in particular your Rangers, upheld your programs in the highest manner. Professional and knowledgeable, interested in the safety of their charges (HSC Ranger James McGrew), I have recommended High Sierra Camps to many.

Thank you for all you do.

Correspondence ID: 159 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,14,2016 17:18:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

A keen oversight to the park allowing valley and back country visitation with minimal long term damage

Topic Question 2:

Managing the volume of visitors in a way that allows everyone fair access without permanently damaging the park.

With the limited resources the NPS has, having assistance managing back country hikers and campers from responsible guide companies seems only logical.

Comments: I personally participated in a guided summit of Half Dome with back country camping. Not only was it prudent, I learned SO MUCH MORE than I ever would have on my own. I was thoroughly educated on not only the the physical surroundings but the etiquette of back country hiking and camping. In addition to, I learned a ton of safety issues the NPS cannot begin to educate EVERY hiker and camper on.

I had planned on returning with my son to do more back country hiking and camping in Yosemite but would not consider it without a guide. They provide emergency communications, first aid and even trauma assistance if needed not only for their group but for anyone who would truly need it. They should be considered additional NPS resources.

I cannot believe that the NPS would consider limiting them for those very reasons. Almost seems like you would be increasing NPS liability by not having these trained people providing coverage in remote areas.

I can't say enough about what my guide taught our group, the security we felt, how much we enjoyed their company (they are usually nice people who choose to do it) and what we learned about protecting the back country. I couldn't have learned it from a brochure.

Correspondence ID: 160 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,14,2016 19:04:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Our family's first visit to Yosemite was in 2009 on a long cross-country trip. We had never been to a large national park and decided to tackle it on our own. While we absolutely fell in love with Yosemite, it became quite clear that we were only scratching the surface and need to plan a trip back. In July of 2014, we planned to return to the park. After much research, it was obvious that for novices such as ourselves to enjoy the park to the fullest, we had to go with a professional guide service. Because Yosemite allows reputable companies and their guides to bring people into the park and go to areas that most of the general public does not go to, is a a fantastic way to allow us to immerse ourselves in nature. I cannot imagine doing it any other way. That being said, I also feel that the Yosemite park service does a fantastic job welcoming non-guided families (as we were on our first visit). The park offers so many services so that virtually anyone can experience Yosemite as they wish.

Topic Question 2:

The preservation of our national parks is a major issue. I feel that our environment is being taken for granted. While allowing the public into the park may pose some risk to the very wilderness that needs to be protected, closing the park to the back country would not allow people to experience nature outside of their backyards. There is no better way to educate people about nature than to allow them to explore the park.

Comments: We hiked Yosemite for 4 days. We really roughed it, with tents, food supply and no showers! Our guide, Seamus, from Wildland Trekking, educated us every step of the way regarding man's footprint on nature and how we must all do our best to preserve what is there. We hiked Clouds Rest and Half Dome and absolutely could not have done it without the expertise of a professional guide. In addition, the safety of hikers is of utmost importance and the guides provide invaluable information about surroundings and wildlife. And there are no better stewards of the parks than those who love them so and spend a great deal of time within them. Wildland Trekking and companies like it offer a vast amount of options and should not be limited to what they offer their guests or the number of trips they can take. Guide companies bring so many to Yosemite who may not otherwise embark on a trip of that nature.

This was a trip of a lifetime and one I am sure my sons, my husband, and myself will never forget! Yosemite will always be one of our very favorite places to visit, and I am sure our children will bring their families there someday!

Correspondence ID: 161 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,15,2016 12:09:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

My comments are mainly to speak positively about reputable guide companies such as Wildland Trekking. I think guided visitors should be able to access the same areas as non guided visitors. Guided trips are done with less overall impact to the natural area as the company is very wary of its footprint on the landscape and works to educate people to minimize their footprint as well. They are familiar with the area which increases safety and can help limit Park search and rescue efforts that may result from non guided visitors getting lost in back country areas or getting injured in areas that are unsafe.

I think limiting or eliminating the access of guide companies to operate in Yosemite's back country areas is a policy that will be detrimental to community and the park itself as it will lower tourism dollars and possibly also raise injury rates in the park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 162 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,15,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

As a camper/hiker/backpacker for the past 60 years, I especially value trails and campsites with fewer people. At 71 years of age, my usual hiking/camping activities are accessed by car, but in 2015 I experienced a ranger-led Yosemite 5-day tent camp loop. It was challenging and inspiring. The areas accessed were breathtakingly beautiful. The camps (and staff) were outstanding and gave me great respect for the effort involved in maintaining them with minimal environmental impact. They are unique means for the lucky few to experience true wilderness and learn about its conservation.

Topic Question 2:

The increased pressure for tourist access while preserving the beauty and wilderness seems to be the most important issue, with its associated maintenance of roads and facilities. Shuttle buses have helped and current facilities are adequate, but demand continues to increase. Fees for park access should be increased to cover the costs of upgrades and maintenance, but no more land should be used for camping, parking etc.

The trails and wilderness campsites should be maintained and especially the tent camps which provide a less strenuous means of accessing the wilderness than true backpacking.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 163 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,15,2016 19:33:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
My access to the High Sierra Camps!

Topic Question 2:

Continued operation of the High Sierra Camps!

Comments: In the summer of 2014 I was able to experience Yosemite's HSCs as part of a ranger-guided 5-day hike. These camps made it possible for me to access and enjoy -- cherish -- Yosemite's wilderness. Please do not take this opportunity away from other hikers like me!

Correspondence ID: 164 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,16,2016 08:57:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Respect for the ecosystem.

Topic Question 2:

Too many people. I feel the expanded use of part time rangers and the presence of professional guides whose wherewithal depends of the proper stewardship of these wonders has helped.

Comments: As a 56 year old, male Appalachian I am challenged by the differences and distances in enjoying Rocky Mountain trips. I have used guided trips in Glacier, Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, and Yosemite in order to feel safe and enjoy the back country of these incredible places. A

guide service allows me to travel alone and join groups, educates me on the dangers of local wildlife, and insures that I 'LEAVE NO TRACE.' Guide companies help expose these wonders to more people and help insure that these new folks do not abuse these wonders. They also help me find the gems in selecting the right route and campsites to maximize my experience.

Correspondence ID: 165 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,16,2016 10:04:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the preservation and stewardship of the beautiful natural resource of Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:
Overuse of certain locations/trails within the Wilderness

Comments: My most recent trip to Yosemite(2014) was a 3 night, 4 day guided backpacking trip in Yosemite. As retired adults, my husband and I were safely and professionally guided through backcountry trails that neither of us would have been able to safely navigate and enjoy on our own. Part of your study is to effectively and efficiently manage and mitigate the physical impacts of wilderness travel, with limited resources. I would think that rather than considering limiting commercial guided trips, you would want to expand, commercial guided trips. Wouldn't you rather have visitors in the wilderness guided by professionals that know what they are doing out there than individual backpackers that are often ill prepared or insensitive to the protection of the natural resources? Commercial guides are fully trained to protect the environment as well as the park visitor which will result in fewer emergency rescues or harsh impacts to the environment.

I strongly recommend the expansion of guided commercial trips and limiting individual traffic on backcountry trails.

Correspondence ID: 166 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,16,2016 16:31:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I very much appreciate the NPS's efforts to balance the needs and interests of the wilderness and of the more managed parts of Yosemite, with those of we humans. Much hard work and many headaches involved. Thank you.

Yosemite has played a central role in my life, as it has in so many of our lives.

I'm commenting here because I want to advocate for the continuation of the High Sierra Camps. I believe they should continue to have their special status as "potential wilderness additions" (or whatever language works), which was given them because they pre-date the wilderness designation. Each camp is part of a long, honorable and unique tradition of wilderness access and education. The traditional presence of ranger-naturalists is a special gift to those few lucky people who get to travel to the Camps.

The Camps enable people who would not travel to the backcountry to "get the glad tidings" and experience the transformation that can only happen through immersion in this powerful place.

For example: last summer, my then 23 year-old daughter joined us on a 5-day High Sierra Camps loop trip, accompanied by ranger-naturalist Adrianna Hirtler. I watched my daughter burst into love for knowledge about the Sierra plants, trees, birds and mammals, waters and light, human and cultural history. This bright young woman is now looking into master's programs in Environmental Studies, so that she can devote her life's energies to trying to protect and heal the environment.

This could only have happened for her through the High Sierra camps experience; there is no way she would have gone on an independent backpacking trip. Even if she had, on an independent trip she would have missed the company of the naturalist and of the other inspired souls on the trail and in the camps.

As an older person now, I hadn't been in the backcountry for years until our High Sierra Camps trip last summer - and wouldn't have made it back up there, were it not for the Camps. I was curious about how being in that glorious country might affect me this time. Sure enough, change happened. Within a month of returning to the Bay Area I was enrolled in a year-long course in Permaculture, and as my retirement from full-time work approaches I'm figuring out ways I can help communities adopt practices to bring people in better balance with our habitats.

For the sake of the participants and of the great work we can do on behalf of the wilderness and our planet with the inspiration gained through High Sierra Camp travel, I hope you grant many years' continuation to the High Sierra Camps.

Topic Question 2:
To me a most important issue facing the Yosemite Wilderness today is the question about the continued existence of the High Sierra Camps. I understand the issues involved with pack animals, human waste, trail use, etc., and I whole-heartedly urge you to approve continuation of the operation of these camps. On balance, I am confident that the positive outcomes of people's participation on trips to these camps makes continuing the camps the best choice.

As I said in response to Question 1:
I'm commenting here because I want to advocate for the continuation of the High Sierra Camps. I believe they should continue to have their special status as "potential wilderness additions" (or whatever language works), which was given them because they pre-date the wilderness designation. Each camp is part of a long, honorable and unique tradition of wilderness access and education. The traditional presence of ranger-naturalists is a special gift to those few lucky people who get to travel to the Camps.

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For the sake of the participants and of the great work we can do on behalf of the wilderness and our planet with the inspiration gained through High Sierra Camp travel, I hope you grant many years' continuation to the High Sierra Camps.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 167 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,16,2016 19:21:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
They manage Wilderness as Wilderness, not as a developed access area.

Topic Question 2:

Impacts from increased yearly use via population growth, and recreation trends.

Address increased use at its point of origin. Acknowledge that increased use on some corridors may be unavoidable; isolate these impacts with greater simple facilities and corresponding restrictions. (see below).

Extended seasonal use due to "Climate Change" (aka global warming, lengthened fire season, mirco-climate change).

Comments: Comments to the Public Scoping for the Wilderness Stewardship Plan Update 1/16/16

The current (1989) Wilderness Stewardship Plan (W.S.P.) acknowledges the resources of, the character of, and experiential values of Wilderness, and is a practical guide with which manage the Yosemite Wilderness.

The opportunity to update the Plan, in order to incorporate updated information and settings is timely, to say the least. There were just over 29 million people living in California in 1989. In 2016, the California population is approximately 38.8 million, well over 10% o the entire Nation's population.

It's no wonder Yosemite National Park saw a record number of summertime visitors during the summer of 2015.

Increasing numbers of users mean more impacts to wilderness. Add to this a trendy presence of outdoor adventure themes in advertising, news, and even the NPS's own image, and I believe we can expect wilderness use to continue increasing, over time.

I believe it is more important to retain the quality of the resources (Plant, Animal, Mineral, Water and Air, and ecosystem function,), over the accommodation of users, who by their growing numbers alone, and despite responsible Wilderness use when gauged by individual actions, may in some cases, outpace the wilderness' ability to regenerate. (Think lakeside vegetation, and water quality)

It seems important to allow users to understand why they are sometimes asked to follow the rules within a wilderness setting, which at times may be restrictive (think camping in L.Y.V.). This concept of education is already in use throughout the Park's front' and backcountries, and may soften the blow to a public's sense of access, if new future restrictions are applied.

In the 1989 W.S.P., the example of 200 people camping at a backcountry lake as unacceptable to Wilderness, and describes the introduction of trail quotas. These quotas have, since that time served the Wilderness, and the wilderness experience well.

I hope that the updated plan will contain the current focus on retaining the qualities of Wilderness that my generation has enjoyed, and will anticipate, and include, enhanced focus on Wilderness user education (and other management techniques), that may result is lesser impacts per user, as we who use the Wilderness really are - for better or worse - the Stewards.

This is especially true if the Updated Plan is expected to serve an additional 25 years into the future.

The following are a list of ideas, thoughts and concerns I have about the W.S.P. Update:

Do not use the Update of the Plan as a means to undo what has been successful for 25 years. Carefully review the existing plan, and analyze the success or failure of the policies established therein to protect the resources, including species, habitat, air and water, and call out changes made to the '89 plan within the updated plan.

Keep changes in line with preserving Wilderness, even when it involves a change that accommodates increased future use.

Do Not use the Update as a tool to allow Increased Impacts to Resources; find a way to lessen impacts despite increased Visitor use numbers.

Include studies in the EIS that track the influence of human use within popular wilderness areas such as the JMT and its trail-tributaries, with regard to social trails, campsite creation and use, human waste and its impacts to water, impacts to cultural and listed resource sites. Consider the success or limitations of the current trail quota system in retaining the wilderness value of these popular areas. Consider creating 'Zones' that designate camping areas within those corridors.

Consider that heavy use in a given region of wilderness may change its experiential character as well as overly impact some resources. Weigh the differences of accommodating the increased use via greater restrictions and/or facilities vs. spreading the same total wilderness use impacts to other

wilderness areas of the Park.

For instance: Is it better to control water quality impacts by adding toilets and designated group camps sites to the JMT, if a similar number of feces drops to 'cat holes' in lesser used areas will affect previously unaffected water qualities in those areas, if the net result is lower overall impacts to water quality?)

Emphasize education at the public interface, to help current users understand their own impacts individually as well as cumulatively, as a significant part of the total public impact on resources, emphasizing responsibility to maintain the unspoiled character of Wilderness for future generations. Use the photographic record and other tools to demonstrate the long term changes that a short term visitor may be unaware of, to stimulate a sense of stewardship.

Consider the value of regions of wilderness that rarely see human use, to species affected by human presence, including breeding and rearing sites of animal species, habitat of rare plants, etc.

Consider the potential for increased impacts stemming from Media enhancement of outdoor recreation's image in the popular mind, and the unavoidable uptick in Wilderness use stemming from an ever growing human population.

Include impacts to Wilderness from outside sources such as air pollution, animal range and migration, the role of advertising and entertainment media.

Include the description of Yosemite Wilderness' role in species preservation, and include consideration of degradation outside the Park Wilderness boundary as impacts to species as a whole.

Create clear and meaningful penalties for the willful, and/or negligent destruction of Park Wilderness resources.

Require certification of Park Partners, and other Guide Services that utilize the Yosemite Wilderness, and stake licensing permission on the outfit/company/organization on actual compliance with legal and wilderness policy parameters.
Do not allow off-trail use by commercial Park users.

Consider Cell Towers as distracting from Wilderness Character, Experience, and Values. Maintain the moratorium on additional Utility lines found in the current Plan, and include a prohibition of new 'Wireless Transmission Towers' in the updated Plan.

Maintain Personal Responsibility for Risk as part of Wilderness, and do not accommodate Wireless Transmission Towers as a means of De-Wildernessing for the sake of the unprepared user.

Correspondence ID: 168 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,17,2016 08:36:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the way they balance preservation and public access.

Topic Question 2:

From my observations, allowing untrained and inexperienced individuals into the wilderness without a stand of evaluation of a guide is one of the leaded threats to the wilderness.

Comments: I was able to enjoy a life changing experience in the Yosemite backcountry with my wife for our honeymoon. The only way we were able to have this experience was through the skills and adeptness of our guide who worked for Wildland Trekking.

Coming from Massachusetts, we would not have been able to haul all of our gear to Yosemite without great expense and burden. Wildland took care of all that. More importantly, our skilled guide ensured that our limited time and money were well spent as we backpacked from Tuolumne Meadows out to Vogelsang and back again.

Our guided experience ensured that we got maximum value and safety while also learning the rules and etiquette that govern respectful and non-damaging enjoyment of the wilderness. I think that the ability for guides to have access to and be able to lead experiences in all parts of the park is important as I cannot think of a scenario where a guide would do anything but be of help, safety and preservation.

Simply put, our experience in Yosemite changed our lives and it was only possible because we were able to hire a guide. Without guides, most citizens and international visitors would not be able to enjoy our national treasures.

As you reevaluate your policies for preserving Yosemite, please keep in mind that high value, safe and respectful use of it is critically supported by the guides.

Correspondence ID: 169 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,17,2016 11:34:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
That the Park Service recognizes the Wilderness Act of 1964 as the primary source of managing Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

The impact of use on the resource. The impact can be mitigated by reducing destination use and removing trails that access common destinations.

Comments:

1. Control better the climbing on 'Yosemite' Walls. El Capitan as an example has deteriorated markedly from a more pristine condition of merely 50 years ago.

2. Trails are not Wilderness, they are an expedient means of transporting people. Limit or reduce the amount of trails.

3.If restoration of wildlife (ie; Bighorn Sheep) is part of the Yosemite Wilderness management process then the Yosemite Grizzly Bear deserves its place as well.

4.The High Sierra Camps are not in Wilderness,however; they may be removed in respect of Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 170 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,17,2016 11:57:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the presence of National Park Service staff providing services to park visitors. From entrance station, restoration and trail workers, to interpretation and wilderness law enforcement rangers, it's important to me to see NPS staff in uniform looking after Yosemite's resources. I value the presence of NPS staff conducting research, helping park planners and managers to make informed decisions based on scientific evidence. I value the passion and commitment of National Park employees in carrying out NPS' mission. The agency can't carry out its mission or implement plans without a robust and qualified staff. I've noticed in the past few years that some jobs have been 'outsourced' to volunteers. Although volunteers have their place in the park, it's asking too much of them to perform duties that should be done by park employees. Finally, I value the open dialogue and the opportunity the help NPS better manage Yosemite resources.

Topic Question 2:

The notion that wilderness is a monolithic and static place in which human beings are just a transient presence is problematic in a world in which human impacts go beyond the boundaries protected places. The National Park Service Organic Act calls the agency to "promote and regulate the use of the [national parks] which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Key words in the act are unimpaired and future generations. How to maintain the resources unimpaired in the face of global changes in climate? How to ensure future generations interest in the park if limiting access to park resources seem to be the preferable way to manage the impacts of visitation? There is no easy answer to these questions, but one way to address them is to embrace change and acknowledge that the parks only make sense if open to the public. A balance between day users and overnight users must be struck. More resources must be directed at restoration of impacted areas and maintenance of trails. Contemplative forms of recreation (i.e. hiking and photography), aren't the only ones suitable at wilderness settings. Well regulated commercial guiding services have their place in the park and could help NPS further its mission through education.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 171 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,17,2016 12:48:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Yosemite is a treasure and I have been fortunate to live close enough to have visited the Park many times. My parents, however, had been able to visit only once although the federal taxes that they had paid over time supported the park. I sometimes think wilderness designations are made to limit areas to a few fortunate people at the expense of many working Americans who have supported the National Park system for years. I recall the walk-in campground in the Valley where one is supposedly limited to 30-days but where many have stayed indefinitely.

I think the High Sierra Camps are a wonderful treasure that have been loved by many for decades and I hope they continue. They allow many to see parts of the Park that would be inaccessible to them otherwise. I'd much rather see decibel limits on sound systems brought into the Valley than remove the High Sierra Camps.

Topic Question 2:

I think the most important issue is continuing to allow access to working families that support the National Park system by paying taxes and not limiting the Park system to a select few people.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 172 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,17,2016 14:24:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I especially value the High Sierra Camps, and the fact that they make the wilderness experience available to people for whom pure backpacking may not be an option. I have twice participated in the 7-day guided hikes (once at age 52 and again at age 68) and am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be immersed in that grandeur - - something that would not have been possible without the HSCs.

Topic Question 2:

The number one issue, without a doubt: climate change. No idea what needs to be done in Yosemite Wilderness in particular, other than anticipate impacts to the extent possible. A related issue is the growing number of people drawn to the park: possibly expanding advance permit/reservation system could be appropriate.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 173 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,17,2016 14:39:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think the permit system is good at controlling the number of people using the park and controlling the number of people on half dome. Also allowing guiding companies the ability to run excursions in the park is good at allowing inexperienced backpackers, like myself and my husband, the opportunity to

experience the Yosemite wilderness in an appropriate way that reduces the impact on the environment. Also being able to book with a guiding company allowed us to plan our trip to America in advance without having to worry about the permit lottery.

Topic Question 2:

Ensuring the wilderness is not overused or mistreated by those that use it. More evaluation of those requesting wilderness permits, increased education on best practices and higher fines for damage cause to the environment.more guiding trips available for more inexperienced back packers.

Comments: My husband and I are lucky enough to have been to Yosemite on two occasions, the second of which we were able to take a 3 day back packing trip to climb half dome using Wildland trekking. By using a company like Wildland trekking we were not only able to organise the 3 day guided trip into our 19 day holiday, they also provided all of the following benefits:

- The camping equipment, back packs, bear canisters and walking poles for the trip
- All the food for the trip , which was cooked by our guide, including catering for my dietary requirements
- A guide knowledgeable in the area, supporting us on the hike and in back packing practices to ensure we left no trace of our visit and followed safe fire procedures
- A guide that taught us about the wildlife and history of the area as we walked making me cherish it even more
- Pre-trip advice to ensure we were well prepared for the challenges of the trip physically as well as with the correct kit
- Supplying the permits for camping in the wilderness and climbing half dome
- The encouragement and support to make the climb of half dome
- The benefit of doing so in a group and getting to know new people

As we come from the UK, without these benefits we would not have been able to enjoy the wilderness of Yosemite or felt safe and confident entourage to do so. Yosemite is my favourite place in the world, from all the places I have visited and being able to do a trip like this has only reinforced this, as well as giving us the sense of achievement we gained from climbing half dome.

I believe there should be more opportunity for people to take guided trips in Yosemite as I believe they offer people a better way of getting access to the wilderness without such a risk of letting inexperienced people out into the wilderness, as a result I think more limits on permits for people who cannot provide examples of experience they have gained should be more restricted rather than g restricting guiding companies.

I think that as long as the companies are acting responsibly and should be able to prove this, there should not be new restrictions placed on these companies to restrict guiding as I feel that in my experience these trips are designed not to leave a negative impact on the environments and if I was going to do a wilderness trip again, would look to use a company to guide this trip in the future as I feel this is the best way for me to ensure I get to experience Yosemite and to ensure it is there for future generations to enjoy too.

Correspondence ID: 174 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,17,2016 15:10:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Please refer to letter below in Comments

Topic Question 2:

Please refer to letter below in Comments.

Comments: Dear Superintendent Neubacher,

I have been hiking and backpacking in the Yosemite wilderness since 1978, traveling both on and off trail in every area of the park from Virginia Pass to Post Peak Pass. Some of the most memorable and meaningful experiences of my life occurred in the Yosemite wilderness.

The primary consideration in formulating a new Wilderness Stewardship Plan is to preserve the Yosemite wilderness in as pristine condition as possible. Leave No Trace principles should guide all aspects of any new plan. Any activity that might potentially violate Leave No Trace needs to be regarded as a threat to the Yosemite Wilderness and the Wilderness Act.

The most important aspect of any new Wilderness Stewardship Plan is how well the plan's rules and regulations will be enforced. Currently, the lack of sufficient backcountry rangers adversely effects the Yosemite wilderness. Too many hikers and backpackers ignore the existing rules. They build fires in prohibited areas, camp too close to lakes and creeks, cut switchbacks, make excessive noise (no one should be playing a portable music player except while wearing earphones) and fail to pack out their garbage because they know they can get away with not adhering to the rules. This is despite the lecture everyone receives when picking up their permit as well as the rules being printed on every permit. Since it is unlikely they will encounter a ranger they feel free to flout backcountry regulations. First and foremost, Yosemite National Park must commit the necessary money and personnel to maintain the Yosemite Wilderness so it exists with minimal human impact and ensures each visitor has an optimal wilderness experience.

The best way to minimize adverse human impact on the Yosemite wilderness is to limit party size. The worst damage I have witnessed has always been done by large groups. The limit for party size for overnight backpacking on a trailed route should be a maximum of 12 individuals, not 15. This limit should apply to both stock groups and backpackers. For those who will be traveling off-trail, the limit should be 6 individuals in order to mitigate the impact on these especially fragile areas.

In terms of quotas, there should be no quota for day hikers. However, party size should be limited to 12 individuals for all non-ranger-led or professionally guided day hikes. Large groups of day hikers are both destructive to trails and disruptive to other hikers. Encountering a party of 20 day hikers in Lyell Canyon or on the PCT to Glen Aulin is not a true wilderness experience. Though there may be issues with education and enforcement that make this impractical, this is something to at least consider.

The quotas for backcountry travel should be reassessed. Quotas should reflect not only the entrance trail, but also the planned exit trail and the first night's camping choice. For example, for the John Muir Trail out of Tuolumne Meadows, most hikers may camp the first night at the Ireland Junction or before the climb out of the canyon. However, those hiking the JMT or PCT probably go further. Taking that into consideration could lead to the quota being slightly readjusted to possibly include more backpackers per day than the current quota. This same re-evaluation could also be applied to the trails leaving

Yosemite Valley. So for the JMT out of Tuolumne and Yosemite Valley, there could be a separate quota for the Ireland Junction/upper Lyell Canyon and another for points beyond, and a separate quota for Little Yosemite Valley and another for destinations beyond. An example of a current trailhead where this is already applied is Glen Aulin where there is a different quota for the Waterwheel/Cold Canyon pass through. The exact numbers for each trailhead need to be considered by studying recent permit data.

Also, backcountry travelers should be encouraged to camp away from the overused campsite areas of the backcountry. I say "encouraged" both because that is all the NPS can do in this situation and also because backpackers will often discover a place a quarter or half mile away from an overused and populated camping area that is just as or more beautiful while enjoying solitude. I can testify to this because my family and I have been finding and appreciating such campsites for many years.

I am not sure if it is possible to do more than is currently being done in terms of routing and maintenance on the overused trails in places such as Lyell Canyon, Rafferty Creek to Vogelsang, and Cathedral Lakes. Maybe a trail expert would disagree, but from my perspective the changes already made over the last 30 years in those and other locations are probably the best one can do.

In terms of existing "use trails" becoming maintained trails, any new plan should consider this on a case-by-case basis. For example, the trail above Unicorn Lake to Nelson Lake should be transformed into an official maintained trail due to its heavy use that has created erosion problems in many portions. However, the use trail in upper Virginia Canyon should be left alone. I suspect there are other use trails that may need to become maintained trails due to there being multiple use trails in an area instead of a single maintained trail so that meadow, shoreline damage, and erosion is minimized as much as possible.

Commercial operations in all of Yosemite need to be reassessed. I'll confine my comments to the Yosemite Wilderness. Since the High Sierra Camps are now a historical tradition and receive heavy use, I doubt there is any chance to permanently close them and remove their structures, despite the desire of many of us backpackers. However, their specific locations, size, and use need to be evaluated. Can the number of overnight visitors be changed? Can the number of employees be changed? Can the number of supply stock trips be cut down? Can the number of stock in each trip be lessened? Can the camps be slightly relocated to mitigate damage to an area? With a new concessionaire, now is the time to study these issues and determine what is actually required versus what is currently being done due to tradition and/or convenience.

Commercially guided trips also need to be reassessed. Party size limits should reflect the route and destination. A guided trip on a trailed route should be limited to 12 individuals (including guides) and trips with off-trail travel limited to 6 individuals. Also, any commercial operator found to be violating the rules should receive a warning and a second violation result in loss of license. This should apply not only to the companies, but also their employees. If an employee of a commercial operator is found to be violating the rules, the company should also suffer the consequences unless that individual's employment is terminated.

Commercial filming and photography should be rigorously policed with party size limits also limited to 12 individuals. It is not a true wilderness experience when one encounters 15 or 20 people engaged in shooting a film or taking a photography class.

Stock travel should be limited to particular trails with as little as possible off-trail travel. Stock travel should be limited to the John Muir Trail and its main tributaries, the Pacific Crest Trail and its main tributaries, and, from Glacier Point and the southern boundary area, the Red Peak Pass Trail and its main tributaries.

The NPS should limit its stock travel as much as feasibly possible while still maintaining its proper stewardship role. Instead of using stock to patrol, the NPS should hire more backcountry rangers. Scientific researchers should travel by foot as much as possible.

It is especially important for a new Stewardship Plan to continue to adhere to the tenets of the Wilderness Act. The Wilderness Act states, "Motorized equipment and equipment used for mechanical transport is generally prohibited on all federal lands designated as wilderness. This includes the use of motor vehicles, motorboats, motorized equipment, bicycles, hang gliders, wagons, carts, portage wheels, and the landing of aircraft including helicopters, unless provided for in specific legislation." Do not permit mountain bikes anywhere in the Yosemite wilderness. No bikes should be permitted anywhere in Yosemite except on paved bike paths and roads.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer scoping comments. I look forward to seeing the preliminary Wilderness Stewardship Plan when it is released. The Yosemite wilderness is a very special area, different in many respects from the John Muir Wilderness and the wilderness areas of Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Parks. The Yosemite Wilderness is a unique place, unlike any other in the world. It must be preserved in as pristine condition as possible so it can be appreciated and enjoyed by future generations.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 175 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,18,2016 09:47:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Everyone has equal access to the backcountry today. I think that is important.

Topic Question 2:
Unknown.

Comments: I have joined several guided trips in National Parks primarily in the western US. These trips have been wonderful for me, and have been a great addition to my personal experience. Living in Indiana I cannot get the same experience there as I can out west.

I have a guided trip coming up this fall, and I believe that guided visitors and non-guided visitors should have equal access to Yosemite's back country. I also believe that guide companies should not be limited in the places they can take guests or the number of trips they can run.

My experience has been that guide companies provide education, safety, and enjoyment for guests, and stewardship of our precious national parks. My

guides have always treated the land very respectfully...practicing leave no trace.

Please allow guided trips to continue in Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 176 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,18,2016 16:17:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value almost everything about how the NPS manages the Yosemite Wilderness! Really, the NPS is doing a fantastic job. I think the permit/quota system works well. The rangers I've met have always been super friendly and helpful. I think the change to including a Donahue exit quota was a good way to try to reduce the impacts of crazy JMT usage. Thanks!

Topic Question 2:

The negative impacts of commercial pack trains is the area that most needs to be addressed.

In particular, the pack trains supporting the High Sierra Camps negatively impact portions of the Yosemite Wilderness in ways I can't believe is allowed. In early summer of 2014 my wife and I witnessed massive damage to the meadows alongside Rafferty Creek trail. The damage was caused by pack trains going to open up the Vogelsang High Sierra Camp. The mules had been taken off the trail for long portions and turned large areas of meadow into a muddy mess. We documented the damage and sent photos to the Wilderness Manager (Mr. Dunleavy).

The pack trains helping to open the Sunrise camp greatly diminished our enjoyment of the hike in from the Cathedral Lakes trailhead. There were at least four long pack trains that passed us, requiring us to step off the trail and breathe the dusty air they created. The amount of manure on the trail was revolting to say the least, and probably was a health hazard once it was ground into fine dust we inhaled.

We've hiked the corridor trails in the Grand Canyon, and while there are MANY commercial pack trains there, the manure on the trail is minimal. Why doesn't Yosemite require the commercial operators to clean up their manure?

Personally, I believe the High Sierra Camps should be removed.

The High Sierra Camps are not an appropriate use of the Wilderness and their lavish meals require even more pack trains than would otherwise be required. Removing all (or at least some) of them would greatly reduce the impact of commercial pack trains on the Wilderness.

I know that many wealthy individuals with political connections will probably not let the Camps be closed. If the NPS won't remove the Camps, then at a minimum the concessionaire should be required to minimize their impacts in the following ways:

- 1) No commercial pack trains should be allowed to travel to or from the Camps unless the ground is solid, and any deviation from the trail should result in significant fines to the concessionaire.
- 2) The food served at the High Sierra Camps should be limited to what typical backpackers eat, i.e. rehydrated meals and water. Bringing steaks and wine into the Camps on commercial pack trains is causing unnecessary damage to the Wilderness in order to provide sumptuous meals for the well-to-do.
- 3) Commercial pack train operators should be required to clean up the manure they produce. Of course this will cost some money, but that cost should be passed on to the High Sierra Camp guests. It is more appropriate that the guests pay for the removal of the manure, than for all other wilderness users to have to step through it and breathe its dust.

I hope you will seriously consider removing some or all of the High Sierra Camps, and that you will require any that remain to minimize their impact on the Yosemite Wilderness in the ways described above.

Thank you,

Comments: The 9,600 foot campfire limitation should be lowered significantly. There are way too many campfire rings in the wilderness and more are added every season. Campfires are just too damaging.

Correspondence ID: 177 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,19,2016 09:37:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the fact that it allows people like myself to be exposed to the high country. I would not have gone into the high country if not for the high Sierra camps. I like that there is a lottery system to manage the numbers. All of the Rangers and people who work at the camps truly love and care about what they do. Their respect and love for Yosemite shows.

Topic Question 2:

The droves of people and cars coming into the valley. Having visited the valley since the fire fall days I do see some positive and some negative things. I think bussing people in who are coming for the day only is a good idea. When we camp we drive our cars in but then use bikes or the shuttle buses to get around during our stay.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 178 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,19,2016 11:08:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate that the NPS provides lodging and direction on how to co-exist with wilderness creatures, how to leave minimal impact on the environment, and especially value the maintenance of the trails for visitors and hikers

Comments: My group (family) hiked with Wildland Trekking's guide (Peter Scott) in Yosemite. We have all visited Yosemite in the past (several times - stayed in Curry Village) and enjoyed day trips but this was our first trip overnight camping in the backcountry. Our group felt confident in Peter's expertise and enjoyed our hiking trip immensely. (3 nights /4 days with a permit) . We never would have ventured out on our own as we don't feel we have the knowledge or experience. We will only ever do that kind of hiking with a guide.

Peter was incredible as he LOVES YOSEMITE and has a vast knowledge of the park (and other national parks, too!). He identified plants and creatures along the way, told us about all the trips he guides and the differences in terrain, etc. He taught us a lot about Yosemite that we never could have learned on our own.

Peter kept us safe (we didn't know that the safest thing to do during a lightning storm is to crouch into a ball and DO NOT lay flat on the ground)! during a terrible pop-up lightning storm (lightning, hail and driving rain that came out of nowhere in the early morning hours. There was flash flooding possibility, etc.

We will only ever hike with a backcountry permit WITH A GUIDE. We are 45years old and are looking for adventure but with the safety and security that only a guide can provide. We all felt that Peter could have handled any emergency situation that came up (injury or illness, etc.).

We wouldn't have enjoyed that rigorous hike nearly as much without a guide.

Backcountry permits should not limit guides to the places they take guests or the number of trips they can run - guides keep the adventurous but less knowledgeable hiker safe and happy and excited to visit (and spend money in!!) the park again.

Correspondence ID: 179 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,19,2016 12:51:05

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate that the number of hikers to Half Dome are limited to reduce impact on the trail and to offer a pleasant, less crowded experience for for hikers. I value that the rangers do check permits on the trail to ensure everyone follows the rules.

Topic Question 2:

We are loving our parks to death. I think that the main issue is inexperienced, thoughtless and casual users who do not fully value or treat with any sort of respect the gift of our National Parks. All visitors to Parks should practice Leave No Trace principles and should, if possible, have some level of education before hiking on potentially dangerous trails in Yosemite.

Comments: Please continue to allow tour companies to guide tours up Half Dome in Yosemite. I very much enjoyed my trip with an approved concessionaire. As a solo traveler on this trip, this was the only way I would have attempted this wonderful trip. It makes all the difference in the world to go with someone who has been to the park before, who knows the trail, can plan a safe and enjoyable trip and who knows any risks, and how to minimize them. There are many advantages to allowing outfitters to lead trips in the park: clients are under the direction of an experienced guide - they are prepared, and much less likely to get hurt or lost and need to be rescued. If they do get hurt, the guide is equipped and able to assist. This assistance is also available to other patrons, who are not paying clients. Having experienced guides on the trail is also like having extra eyes and ears for the Park Service to monitor the treatment of the park, to look out for unwise, unsafe or even illegal behavior and report it or assist if other visitors need assistance. On numerous occasions our guide helped other visitors with information on the trail, and answered other questions. And with guided tours you can be sure we practiced Leave No Trace principles. Our campsite and the trails were left LESS littered and in better shape than when we found them - for example: we kept our food in the food boxes (unlike other campers we saw who had their food spread all over the campsite by animals) and we didn't feed animals by leaving our backpacks out where the marmots could ransack them (as we saw at the foot of Half Dome). Guided tours are a valuable service that is a money-maker of the company, but also offers benefits to the Park Service. Again, please continue to allow outfitters to lead trips up Half Dome. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Correspondence ID: 180 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,19,2016 14:47:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

We visited this fall and hired a guide from Wildland Treking and it was a fabulous day! We never would have seen as much as we did with this gentleman who took us through. He knew exactly where we could go with our ability and we far exceeded what we would have done on our own. I don't think a guide company should be eliminated from using Yosemite. We learned so much about the area and our guide was very knowledgeable about so much of the natural wonder of the park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 181 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,19,2016 15:57:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Education
Safety
Environmental Conservation
Sustainable ecotourism

Topic Question 2:
Environmental Conservation
Effective Recycling
Water management
Controlled development accommodation and other support services
Protection of Wildlife
Botanical study
Climate change

Comments: Unless I joined a guided trip (as a female travelling alone) it would be difficult to access wilderness areas or backcountry in the USA Guides' local knowledge and their self selected and invested interest in conservation is irreplaceable (even with excellent interpretive signage). NPS and guiding companies can work together to provide sustainable safety and education for visitors from the USA and overseas, surely a vision dating back to 1864?

Correspondence ID: 182 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,19,2016 23:43:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the way the Park Service has made access available to the wilderness by balancing the needs of different segments of the visiting public with the environmental issues of the wilderness. By this I mean that there are some roads and facilities so everyone can experience major aspects of the park. There are trails and campsites for those of stronger body and spirit to venture deeper. There are children education programs and Ranger led programs to enhance visitor experience.

One segment of the visitor population, like myself, cannot access the deep wilderness as a robust backpacker. Some of my greatest experiences in Yosemite have been deep wilderness hikes using the High Sierra Camps as a support mechanism. I can't carry a pack heavy enough to hike multiple days into the wilderness without these camps. Last season I got to experience the beauty and solitude of Merced Lake which would have been impossible for me to visit without these camps. I believe these camps are well managed and great care is taken to minimize impact on the wilderness. I believe these camps represent an excellent balance between giving access to visitors while keeping to the mandate of a sound sustainable wilderness plan.

Topic Question 2:

I think the most important threat to Yosemite Wilderness today is climate change and the Western drought. Forest fires and drought-based disease may possibly change the Wilderness in significant ways. Using the watershed wisely is critical. Perhaps the biggest help the Park Service can do is to use the opportunity of having millions of visitors to educate them to the risks and consequences of global warming.

Comments: Keep the Yosemite High Sierra Camps open and undiminished. They give access to a segment of the population that would not otherwise be able to gain a deep wilderness experience. It is such experiences that make people truly appreciate the value of wilderness.

KEEP UP THE GOOD JOB YOU DO!

Correspondence ID: 183 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 09:16:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Allowing and supporting accessibility of the entire park, by guided and non-guided visitors alike.

Topic Question 2:

Excessive site & trail damage/natural interference is always a constant balancing act to mitigate without overly restricting visitors.

Comments: My wife and I visited Yosemite this past Fall, starting through Tuolumne Meadows, heading up through Vogelsang and looping back. We were with a small guided group through Wildland Trekking, and the experience was absolutely fantastic. While we have moderate backpacking experience on the east coast, the combination of the permit system and the territory made it important for us to seek a guided tour. This allowed us to fully experience and respect the wilderness without the worry of choosing an appropriate itinerary, not finding ourselves in the wrong direction or losing the ability to call for assistance if needed (it was not). The guides also helped to be fully prepared for the challenges prior to our visit so we would be able to traverse the park safely and effectively.

It upsets me that there is a consideration that guided tours would be limited or eliminated. Tours allow visitors to travel safely and enjoy their experience, even if they aren't the most hardened of backcountry visitors, without the worry of being lost, accidentally not following park rules, or going in unprepared. I do think it is very important to ensure that wilderness impact is reduced to a minimum, and that guided companies should adhere to strict etiquette and behavior that enforced "only footprints". Our particular tour guide took great care to emphasize walking on only the approved, active trails between sites, and communicated the importance of leaving everything as it was found for future visitors to enjoy.

Tours also make visitors more responsible and accountable; many sites we visited had unguided individuals camping in unauthorized camping sites. While I believe the park services does everything in their power to discourage this, guides provide a second set of eyes to make sure that at least their own guests

are acting appropriately.

The final word is that guided tours allow individuals who would otherwise not be able to safely visit the backcountry to do so responsibly. Natural wonders like Yosemite should not only be preserved but remain accessible to those wishing to experience it.

Correspondence ID: 184 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 09:16:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

That folks like myself can take a guided backpacking trip to experience all the park has to offer in the safest possible manner for wildlife and humans.

Topic Question 2:

That these areas are preserved and enjoyed for decades to come. To accomplish this, people need to be educated in how to be stewards of these parks so that they can be enjoyed for generations.

Comments: I have plans this year to take my 4th backpacking trip in a National Park. I would not venture doing this without a guided tour.

The guides offer knowledge of safety for hikers as well as wildlife, which is paramount. I would not feel safe doing this without a guide. My husband and I extend our park visits for many days beyond our guided backpacking adventure which brings revenue to the park and surrounding businesses. We will soon be bringing our grandchildren with us.

I would think the Park System would prefer to have guided tours to non-guided tours for many reasons but safety would be the highest priority. The guides have educated me on how to enjoy the wildlife and what is safest for them. They have taught us how to be stewards of the environment. I understand that human activity is the best way to destroy these environments. Without the guided tours, hikers loose out on understanding how to be stewards of these beautiful places through example and discussion. I feel that guided tours are most necessary in the backcountry but they should also be given access to all areas of the park.

Correspondence ID: 185 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 10:51:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 186 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 10:54:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

everything except the below.

Topic Question 2:

respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 187 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 11:13:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

Overcrowding with people. NPS needs to better manage visitor use. Not everyone can come at the same time as everyone else. Reservations, permits, online and digital resources must be developed and used.

Comments: respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes

must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 188 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 11:15:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

There has been reasonable protection of this precious land and its wildlife from over-use, commercialization, and exploitation by entertainment, hunting, and other such interests. More protection is needed, however.

Topic Question 2:

No other issue is as important as protection of this remarkable gem of an eco-system. What constitutes necessary stewardship needs to be re-examined to include responsible management of wildlife as well as the land. If the Park itself is not adequately cared for, there'll be nothing left of its magnificent heritage. We do not need another amusement park or hunting ground!!!!

Comments: Please

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 189 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 11:19:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

That overcrowding, overmanagement of nature, and overdevelopment have not resulted in more ecological damage than has occurred thus far.

Topic Question 2:

Loss of ecosystem elements due to overcrowding and overdevelopment.

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 190 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 11:21:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Please see below.

Topic Question 2:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 191 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 11:33:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

SEE BELOW

Topic Question 2:

SEE BELOW

Comments: Respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

Stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

Remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 192 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 11:34:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
It allows individuals the ability to become a part of nature without interfering with wildlife and the environment

Topic Question 2:
ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 193 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 11:37:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Superintendent January 19, 2016 Yosemite National Park Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389, <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/commentForm.cfm?documentID=69178>

Re: Comments on the scoping letter for the update of the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Dear Superintendent:

Yosemite National Park (YNP) is accepting public scoping comments on its Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement until 1/29/16. The Yosemite Wilderness is 704,000 acres and makes up 94 percent of the Park. The Park Service has raised four issues in the scoping letter-visitor use and capacity, stock use, trail management, and commercial services. These are important issues that are all related to overuse.

The Park Service should:
â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Re:
Comments on the scoping letter for the update of the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan:
http://wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Yosemite_Scoping_01_2016.pdf

Yours sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 194 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 11:51:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
That the vast majority of the park (94%) is designated Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:
Overuse of the Park and its effects are the most important issues. They should be addressed by:

1. Severely limiting commercial services in the Wilderness areas
2. Especially helicopter flying - - that should be eliminated.

Comments: The Wilderness should be the defining aspect of anyone's visit to the Park and it should dictate what is done there.

Correspondence ID: 195 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,20,2016 11:51:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Please refer to the January 19, 2016, letter from Wilderness Watch.

Topic Question 2:
Overuse concerns. The Wilderness Stewardship Plan should:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments: I support the recommendations outlined in the January 19, 2016, letter from Wilderness Watch.

Correspondence ID: 196 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 12:07:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Preserving its wilderness

Topic Question 2:
Please see below.

Comments: To Whom It May Concern:

We are very concerned about preserving the wilderness character of Yosemite. Therefore, we request and urge the following of the National Park Service:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilder

Thank you for your attention to these issues.

sincerely yours,

Correspondence ID: 197 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 12:15:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think the NPS is doing its best to manage Yosemite Wilderness, but I believe there are some significant changes that need to be made. Yosemite is one of my favorite places to hike, and the changes outlined below would increase the wilderness experience for all.

Topic Question 2:
See my comments below.

Comments: I would like the NPS to consider the following changes:

1. Respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness.
2. Stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness. This is particularly important to me.
3. Remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.
4. Ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 198 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 12:16:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value coming to the Yosemite Wilderness, but as I say in question 2 the issues that MUST be addressed and implemented are VERY PRESSING & IMPORTANT!

Topic Question 2:

I STRONGLY ASK THE Park Service to:

RESPECT THE INTENT OF THE Wilderness Act TO LIMIT COMMERCIAL SERVICES IN Wilderness;

â€ IMMEDIATELY STOP THE USE OF HELICOPTERS & OTHER MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT IN THE Wilderness;

â€ REMOVE NONCOMFORMING STRUCTURES & USES IN potential wilderness WITHING THE Park AND DESIGNATE THOSE AREAS AS Wilderness.

â€ ENSURE THAT ALL ALTERNATIVES PRESERVE AND MAINTAIN wilderness character, and REQUIRE the Park Service TO BETTER MANAGE VISITOR USE. NATURAL PROCESSES MUST BE ALLOWED TO DEFINE THE CHARACTER OF THE WILDERNESS.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 199 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,20,2016 12:25:08

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Overall, management of wilderness recreation has been excellent. The trailhead quota system disperses backpacking use but also allows maximum freedom of movement - an essential part of a wilderness recreational experience. I feel very restricted and confined at parks like Grand Teton, where you have to use specific reserved designated camping sites, with no opportunity for spontaneous travel. The requirement for bear canisters for food storage has been a resounding success in removing conflicts with bears, and the way you make it so easy to rent them is great. I also appreciate the efforts over the decades to remove fire rings and restore trampled camping areas. I fully support your latest efforts to limit the numbers of Half Dome climbers and John Muir Trail through-hikers to reduce impacts and allow access for others to the wilderness. Your NPS website materials on trails, backpacking, and the quota system are excellent resources for visitors. The YARTS and concessionaire hiker buses make many interesting wilderness backpacking trips possible by providing transportation to and between trailheads.

Fire management is very enlightened. Letting natural fires burn in the backcountry is great and upholds the wilderness principle.

Topic Question 2:

1) The High Sierra Camps must be closed, the structures removed, and the "potential wilderness" donut holes restored to full Wilderness status! These camps are a complete anachronism from the time before modern lightweight equipment made backpacking accessible to nearly all. They concentrate heavy use, trample the land from both humans and pack animals, degrade water quality, and practically shout in your face "human domination and commercialization" deep in the wilderness. What a horrible disruption of wilderness character! These camps don't encourage people to appreciate wilderness on its own terms - instead, they encourage the attitude of human domination which is the antithesis of wilderness! It pains me to see fragile and beautiful high alpine areas such as Fletcher Lake trampled by the hordes of visitors to the Vogelsang HSC, or the tent cities that look like slums at Glen Aulin and Merced Lake HSC.

2) The Park Service needs to lead by example in preserving the wilderness character. Stop using helicopters in the backcountry except for life-and-death evacuations! Chain saws should not be used for trail maintenance. Although I appreciate trail maintenance as a backpacker, large trail crew camps with their huge tents can be very visually disturbing. Can smaller, more mobile crews be used? This is a great opportunity for the Park Service to interpret to the public by its own actions the true nature of the Wilderness System: human restraint to allow untrammelled natural processes.

3) I really question the need for ANY commercial guide services in the Yosemite Wilderness. This wilderness is so accessible by good trails and easy cross-country routes, and so well described in books and websites innumerable, that anyone with any initiative at all can plan and execute his own backcountry adventures. Guides are NOT "necessary". Sure, there are always those who have more money than time or energy and want to pay someone else to create their vacation experience, but there are other areas in the Sierra or elsewhere that can cater to them. The Yosemite Wilderness is under a lot of pressure from recreational use. We don't need guides to make it easier for more people - particularly uninformed people - to trample the wilderness!

4) You need more wilderness rangers patrolling to educate visitors and enforce regulations! Here are some examples from my experiences. In 1993 I observed trespassing cattle in the upper Thompson Canyon area in northern Yosemite that had come over the ridge from the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. In August 2010 I saw a large Sierra Club group of about 12 people on the cross-country route from Blue Lake Pass into the headwaters of the Merced River, violating your 8 person limit. August 2015, I ran into a group of 12 people with 4 dogs! camped at Mary Lake above Tilden Lake. They had come cross-country over Tower Pass from the Hoover Wilderness and were violating both the 8 person limit for cross-country and the prohibition on dogs.

5) Stop fish stocking in the wilderness - it is totally unnatural. On the other hand, poisoning lakes to remove non-native fish is equally disruptive and we should just let existing populations continue where they are established.

Comments: I have been hiking and backpacking in the Yosemite Wilderness alone and with my family since 1970. I consider it my "home wilderness". In general, I have been happy with the way that Park Service management has kept it from getting trampled, and even allowed recovery from the overuse of the 70s. I worry about the future as pressures increase to compromise wilderness character in the name of administrative convenience or recreational use. The Park Service must hold the line to keep this area truly wild!

Correspondence ID: 200 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,20,2016 12:35:38

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I intend to visit Yosemite for the first time this summer with my family, and I value the national parks' preservation of this country's last great wilderness

areas for the benefit of all Americans.

Topic Question 2:

It is vitally important that we minimize/reduce commercial activity in and around our parks. This includes prohibiting/removing structures in the Park if they are not needed for maintaining the wilderness area, and prohibition of helicopters and other motorized equipment in wilderness areas.

Comments: Above all, the Park Service must respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness, and ensure that actions preserve and maintain wilderness character, and appropriately manage visitor use. We must allow natural processes to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 201 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 12:39:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

During my visit to Yosemite, I was pleased to see that visitors could be accommodated in an affordable manner.

Topic Question 2:

Clearly, this popular park is often crowded. There are traffic jams. How does wildlife deal with encountering these challenges? We must be sure that the wilderness spirit of the park is being supported and maintained while allowing people to access this area.

Comments: I request that you respect the intent of the Wilderness Act and therefore limit commercial services in Wilderness. In addition, please stop the routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness. Please remove those structures and activities which don't conform in potential wilderness areas within the Park, and designate those areas as Wilderness. It is critical to ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, which would require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 202 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 12:40:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

grazing,overuse of motorized vehicles and helicopters,land use issues becoming too political losing site of what wilderness is and how the public wants their lands managed

Comments: I would like to see our public lands managed using sound science and the best effort to keep our public lands in top condition for public use,wildlife management and the least destruction of other land uses making the companies involved in the other uses,mining,logging,etc. solely and totally responsible for any and all damages just like private land is.making absolutely sure that any and all alternatives ensure and preserve wilderness character.remember that these lands are owned by the public and not the rich and powerful.we should have the most say as to how our public lands are managed.

Correspondence ID: 203 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

espect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

espect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Comments: SAve,n our Parks Keep them Wild!!!! No Development at All!!!! For Example Grand Caynon Keep it Natural NO DEVELOPMENT AT ALL!!!!!!!!!!!!

Correspondence ID: 204 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 12:48:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

Please respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness.

Stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness.

Remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 205 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:02:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I encourage the Park Service to:

to:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:
Climate change!

The NPS should use sound science to manage Yosemite rather than politics and corporatist ideology.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 206 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:13:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments: I ask that you please:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 207 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:14:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The National Park Service needs to respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness. Yosemite should be managed more for it's wilderness character and animal populations not to please tourists.

Topic Question 2:

Stop the routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness, remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness. Ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 208 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:17:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I like that wilderness is being preserved for future generations, in spite of pressures to decimate it.

Topic Question 2:

Please preserve the Yosemite Wilderness. Specifically,

• respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

• stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

• remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

• ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 209 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:25:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The ability to be able to "get in touch" with nature.

Topic Question 2:

Over crowding. "Wilderness" not being wilderness. That would mean when you are back country in Wilderness, you can still hear and see airplanes, helicopters and vehicles.

For a true wilderness experience it is very discouraging to hear and see the above mentioned.

Comments: • respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

• stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

• remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

• ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 210 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:28:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in the Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Please stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness.

Comments: Please ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Please remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 211 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:31:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Yosemite is one of the most beautiful of the National Parks. However, overuse threatens it daily. The outback should be left alone as much as possible.

Topic Question 2:

Yosemite Wilderness must be left as wild as possible.

To protect Yosemite National Park, the Park Service must:

• respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

• stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 212 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:36:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 213 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:39:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 214 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 13:48:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I can better answer after I visit Yosemite via my scheduled backcountry guided visit. I can appreciate NPS is monitoring the park traffic and recognizes over-use appears to be occurring.

Topic Question 2:

I can appreciate NPS is monitoring the park traffic and recognizes over-use appears to be occurring but limiting use specifically to guided trips may limit guest access to the backcountry.

Comments: I am currently signed up to go on a guided Yosemite trip. I believe the guide companies provide significant valuable and I would be disappointed if they were limited with their access to the park because that in turn would limit my access to the park. As a newer hiking enthusiast I feel they provide proper education, safety, and help increase appreciation for the parks backcountry. Eventually I may no longer utilize the guided trips but I think they provide a benefit for the guests and the park with their knowledge. If there is too much traffic in the backcountry then limit everyone's access, don't separate out who get's limited.

Correspondence ID: 215 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 14:11:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Maximum freedom with minimal restrictions.

Topic Question 2:

Current management levels are, overall, reasonable. I do fear that government has the tendency to gradually increase it's control unnecessarily. Rarely do I feel that there is a need for increasing restrictions, but I do feel that patrols, both with stock and on foot, should be increased to effectively and fairly enforce current regulations. Historical use should be allowed, including the use of stock and the High Sierra loop camps.

Comments: I have spent a great amount of time in the Yosemite wilderness and, therefore, feel that I have the background and insight to know what level of management works on a long-term basis. Good patrol rangers can be much more effective than excessive numbers of managers working in front of computer screens coming up with more regulations.

Correspondence ID: 216 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 14:17:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the wild parts, the places where native plants and animals flourish, much less survive.

Topic Question 2:

Heavy mechanization creates noise pollution that disrupts the wild animals and the humans seeking refuge from noise and air pollution in wilderness areas.

Comments: To weaken wilderness is an appalling idea. We who love the wild love quiet in which to hear water run or owls hoot or bears roar- -not machinery or helicopters or loud motors of any kind.

Wilderness is meant to allow the wild to flourish, not provide polluting, ecology-destroying, money-draining grazing for the profit of the few from the pockets of taxpayers.

I don't want a bicycle on my hiking trail. I want a trail that is peaceful and safe from traffic of any kind.

Wilderness like Yosemite is a national treasure meant to endure through the foreseeable future, not meant to increase profits for the few at the expense of the taxpayer. Wilderness is meant to clean the air, not increase air and noise pollution.

Please protect the wilderness and the wild feel of Yosemite without loosening the protections of the pristine.

Thank you for considering my opinions.

Correspondence ID: 217 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 14:45:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It has been some time since I was in Yosemite. It is indeed a rather busy place, so I am glad there is a Wilderness area included. If it is like other Wilderness areas, I assume permits are required to enter and limitations are put on activities and places visitors can go, as well as the number of visitors. This is all to the good.

Topic Question 2:

It is very important to keep commercialization out of a wilderness area. The whole point of a wilderness area is that it reminds us, and allows us to take a small taste of, nature without the encroachment of man dominating and partially destroying it. One can imagine what it was like when someone first came there or when the area was inhabited by indigenous tribes whose impact on nature was kept minimal as part of their culture. This also includes the air space, which should not be entered for recreational/touristic reasons, since it is very disturbing to the wildlife, as well as the limited visitors on foot.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 218 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 14:54:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I enjoyed the guided tours that are offered in the park.

Topic Question 2:

I feel the crowded campsites detract from the Park.

Comments: Respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 219 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 14:56:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think the National Park Service does the best it can considering the lack of adequate funding. However, I would like to see less commercial services and less helicopter and other motorized usage. Please step back and take a broader look at how the NPS can keep the Yosemite Wilderness wild. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I think the number of people visiting Yosemite will most likely increase as years go by. Keeping the wilderness wild will be an ongoing challenge. But, as I mentioned in my answer to Question 1, the National Park Service must allow natural processes define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 220 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 14:56:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I am someone who loves and values wilderness and it's true characteristics. I respectfully ask that the NPS:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 221 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 14:57:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:
I ASK FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;
- stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;
- remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.
- ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 222 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 15:08:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

The most important issue facing the Yosemite Wilderness today, and it has many features, is the erosion of the wild character of the Wilderness through inappropriate human activities, pollution, etc. In order to maintain the wilderness character that is the very reason why this region was recognized as deserving of special protection, it is vital that the National Park Service:

- â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;
- â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;
- â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.
- â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 223 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 15:13:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: We encourage you to respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

- â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;
- â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.
- â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 224 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 15:21:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the limited commercial services and motorized vehicles of all kinds.
I value NATURE.
thank you.

Topic Question 2:
Important issues facing Yosemite of which I am aware include:

1 - Pressure to open the area up to commercial interests who are keen to access the market visitors represent. Please restrict development. I do not want services and commercialism in natural areas.

2 - Pressure to open the area up to noisy and dirty recreational and commercial vehicles. Please restrict all vehicle use.

3 - Pressure to extract resources for commercial interest. Please restrict all commercial / mining / forestry operations from our parks.

Comments: Please -

1- respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

2 - stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

3 - remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

4 - ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 225 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,20,2016 15:41:16

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The very fact that it is wilderness is vital to its future. We all need the wild places in order to remain human.

Topic Question 2:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 226 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,20,2016 15:41:21

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Protecting the wild nature of Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

Human impacts on wilderness.

Comments: I urge you to:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 227 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,20,2016 16:07:13

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 228 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,20,2016 16:11:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 229 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 16:21:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:
Park Service, please do the following:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 230 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 16:37:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

Respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness.

stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ Remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ Ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 231 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 16:58:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I believe it is important to preserve wilderness even as it limits economic development.

Topic Question 2:

Too much public and commercial intrusion into wilderness areas at the expense of flora and fauna.

Comments: Please respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in the wilderness; take every measure to stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the wilderness; and act to ensure better management of visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 232 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 17:01:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:
16 Starks Place

Comments: I urge you to

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Preserve the Yosemite Wilderness!

Correspondence ID: 233 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 17:04:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I like how the National Park Service does it's best to manage its lands in a globalistic manner that manages to meet the needs of different guests to the parks while conserves the land it manages.

Topic Question 2:

The Yosemite Wilderness must fight the encroachment of mining companies and, corporations, generally, that would gain rights to park lands that would degrade the land and the wilderness experience for guests.

Comments: The National Park Service, in particular, and the Department of the Interior, generally, must fight the mining corporations that would despoil and degrade the flora and fauna of the national parks.

Correspondence ID: 234 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 17:16:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
None.

Topic Question 2:

Keeping the wilderness a wilderness without adding more trails, buildings, and fly overs by helicopters and airplanes.

Comments: The part of the park that was set aside for the public to "play in" should stay that way but the wild areas should be left untouched for those that enjoy this type of area. Also it would benefit the wildlife which at the moment needs the wilderness for survival.

Correspondence ID: 235 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 17:26:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 236 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 17:33:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS has designated the Yosemite wilderness as a refuge for endangered species and maintains a wilderness experience for Park visitors.

Topic Question 2:

The NPS should respect the Wilderness Act by severely restricting commercial activities within the Yosemite wilderness. Activities that should be stopped are helicopter tourism and other forms of motorized activities except when the health and safety of people and the wilderness are concerned. All nonconforming structures should be removed from the Park with these areas being designated as wilderness. Care should be to maintain the wilderness character of Yosemite allowing natural processes to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 237 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 17:42:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Nothing

Topic Question 2:

No commercial entities of any kind

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 238 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 18:12:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
It tries to preserve the sanctity of real wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Ongoing, more stringent demands from corporations to open more of Yosemite to commercial exploitation, and more profit-driven schemes in central areas.

Comments: Yosemite is one of the most precious gems in the US Park system. To me, personally, it is truly one of the most beautiful places in the world. Since 1974, when I finally took up backpacking as a way of life, I've visited Yosemite more times than I can remember, practicing minimal-impact hiking and camping in many parts of the park. I still try to visit the Park as much as possible; when I can't go personally, on a regular basis I take out some of the thousands of photos I've made, visiting favorite times in favorite places.

Nothing compares to the grandeur and majesty of Yosemite, and I often think of John Muir's reaction to seeing it. Tears still come to me, too, from being overwhelmed, humbled, overjoyed and elated by this coherent system of natural beauty- and I'm a sometimes cantankerous, 66-year-old, retired construction contractor.

There is only one Yosemite. Despite what commercial interests want for short-term, individual gain- -an even more miniscule blink of time, compared to the life of the places that make Yosemite what it is- -this jewel must be preserved and protected at the highest level, and for all time.

Correspondence ID: 239 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 18:31:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
TO LIMIT COMMERCIAL SERVICES IN THE WILDERNESS.

Topic Question 2:
MAINTAINING TH WILDERNESS FOR THE FUTURE.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 240 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Maintaining the bulk of the park in its natural, wilderness state.

Topic Question 2:
Development or leasing of any rights to our national parks must be ended. These lands belong to the American people and should not be a bargaining chip for any lobbyist or any corporate development at public and environmental cost.

Comments: I ask the Park Service to:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

In this period of increasing climate stress, our national parks, forests and monuments must be protected from all environmental dangers and maintained as the wild and green spaces they were meant to be, and not the cash cows that some corporate interests would make them.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Correspondence ID: 241 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 18:41:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Keep it clean and wild

Topic Question 2:
Preservation

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 242 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 19:13:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
That Yosemite has survived and that, given the enormous crowds coming in, the park service tends to do pretty well, generally.

Topic Question 2:
â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

⌘ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

⌘ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

⌘ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 243 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 19:59:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
All efforts to protect wilderness and wildlife in the Park.

Topic Question 2:
Protecting wilderness and wildlife from commercial and encroachment and non-Wilderness Act use.

Comments: Dear National Park Service,

My family and I are writing to ask that you please do all you can to protect the wilderness and wildlife of Yosemite. In particular we ask that you consider the following comments below as you consider the Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.
Points to carefully abide by in decision making for the Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement:

- respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;
- stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;
- remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.
- ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you to your thoughtful attention to our comments.

Correspondence ID: 244 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 20:04:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am asking the Park Service to:

respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness and

ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 245 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 20:30:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The selection of hikers for backcountry passes.

Comments: I would like to ask the Park Service in Yosemite National Park to:

⌘ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

⌘ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

⌘ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

⌘ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 246 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 21:16:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

It should be managed with the intent of the Wilderness Act. Buildings should be removed and mechanized equipment including helicopters should not be

used.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 247 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 22:25:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I love the wide open spaces and beautiful views.

Topic Question 2:

Please put an end to recreational use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness. This is very disruptive for campers, hikers and other visitors. It certainly does not feel like Wilderness with a helicopter buzzing overhead.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 248 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 23:53:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Limiting the amount of people on the trails

Comments: I would like to see more animals introduced back into the wilderness

I would like to see the high sierra camps left the way they are

Correspondence ID: 249 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,20,2016 23:59:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The inter-park shuttle is the best way to limit traffic!

Topic Question 2:

Keeping commercial development and private profit from ruin the public wilderness!

Comments: Please protect the WILD in wilderness!

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for preserving the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 250 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 01:49:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please protect the WILD in wilderness!

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 251 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 02:58:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 252 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 04:02:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Please

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:
Keep the wild WILD

Comments: thank you

Correspondence ID: 253 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 04:09:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please consider the following comments:

Please respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness.

Please stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness.

Please remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Please ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Correspondence ID: 254 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 06:37:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness.

Stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness.

Remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 255 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 07:03:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
They do a great job to preserve a natural environment.

Topic Question 2:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 256 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.21.2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: AS a member of Wilderness Watch, I support their considerations on this issue:

respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;
â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;
â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.
â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

IÁ m an American citizen living and working in Germany, and I vote absentee ballot in all national and state elections.

Correspondence ID: 257 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.21.2016 10:44:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 258 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.21.2016 10:54:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
relatively few roads but we need less cars in parks

Topic Question 2:
keep out all motorized vehicles, reduce pollution please. leave land as wilderness

Comments: limit road development and rely on trails for hiking please

Correspondence ID: 259 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.21.2016 13:38:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The bus service is awesome. Trails are well marked and maintained.

Topic Question 2:
Too many people. Unfortunately, there should probably be a limit to the number of people allowed into the valley in the summer. I went there once in the summer, about 35 years ago, and was stuck in a traffic jam the whole way around the valley. Never went back in the summer again.

Also, generator noise in the campgrounds is completely annoying. People who come to Yosemite should be aware that nature takes precedence. Noise is polluting, and stressful - to humans and animals. And it travels far. Limits on noise should be taken.

Comments: The exclusiveness of the restaurant in the Ahwanee Hotel should end. The whole dress code is ridiculous.

If there is any development in the valley, it should be to include camping.

There should be a more fair system to reserve group spots at Tuolumne Meadows. Several years ago, for several years running, I tried to reserve group spots for a Yosemite Institute group I had, and it was impossible because the sites were all set aside in case any volunteer groups decided at some time to come up and do some work in exchange for a group site. This is bad for a couple of reasons. 1) Groups of families, friends, and organizations cannot camp together if they aren't in a group site. 2) Oftentimes there are no volunteer groups for the group sites, so they sit vacant (I've seen it). Since those sites are such a premium, it seems like they should be made as available to the public as possible.

Also, the reservation system should change so people can reserve individual sites. I am glad that a certain number of sites are set aside for first come first served, but if individual sites cannot be reserved ahead of time it is nearly impossible for families, friends, and organized groups to camp near each other. This just isn't fair and greatly diminishes people's ability to easily plan their days, socialize, enjoy campfires together. Seriously, it is a total drag.

Correspondence ID: 260 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.21.2016 14:35:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Wilderness and the protection of wildlife.

Topic Question 2:
Excessive use and erosion of wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 261 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 15:13:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Clean air, quiet, solitude, somewhat effective crowd control, wilderness rangers to give advice/directions while "taking care" of the too prevalent bad actors.

Topic Question 2:

Constantly increasing human pressure that uses forceful lobbying, political pressures and well financed "influences" to gain their desires in our park's wilderness. Too many of these push to allow expanded uses which degrades wild wilderness values and experiences. No to commercial guiding and packing, no to mountain biking, no to military uses, no to airplane overflights, no human buildings/roads, etc.; capacity standards and - finally - much more wilderness rangers to help but also ENFORCE rules and regs [like fire bans!] Cut back on deputy and assistant big-wig desk jockey positions and hire more wilderness rangers, please.

Comments: Give in a little [degrade wilderness] to "get along" and some time later give in a little for the same reason plus to survive political bullying/heat and then give in a little more down the line, look the other way, accommodate. Result is Americans have unknowingly had their wilderness experience significantly degraded. I don't like campfires during fire ban which I saw in 2015 [Oregon wilderness area.] I don't like Navy planes routinely droning overhead, thrum thrum thrum, degrading the Olympic National Park wilderness beach camping experience. I don't like helicopters zooming up and down Grand Canyon National Park when I visited or making money droning over Crater Lake N. Park, Hawaii Volcanoes N. Park and others. I surely hate snowmobiles zooming around Yellowstone National Park. I also don't like the bad management where trees were cut down so big shot homeowners could have a better view back east. Or the fact that free tickets for the Arizona Memorial, Hawaii were held back and conveyed to commercial tour outfits. I want more enforcement rangers in front and outback in Yosemite Wilderness. And also surely want Park employees and concessionaires top to the bottom to receive real, significant penalties for unethical/illegal/non-policy actions.

Correspondence ID: 262 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 19:52:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please do not adulterate any of our wilderness areas and return all areas now in use for other purposes back to wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 263 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 22:05:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness.

Please stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness.

Please remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Please ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 264 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 07:23:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

I urge YNP to:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 265 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 08:15:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value them keeping Yosemite as pristine as possible. Once the wilderness is gone, it is gone forever.

Topic Question 2:

Preserving the environment & its wildlife. That includes keeping out mining, gas & oil leases, & various construction & development.

Comments: Regarding the Wilderness Stewardship Plan/EIS in Yosemite:
Please:

1. Respect the Wilderness Act & limit commercial services.
2. Stop helicopters & other motorized vehicles.
3. Remove non-conforming structures.
4. Ensure all alternatives preserve & maintain wilderness character.

Correspondence ID: 266 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 08:24:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The NPS tries. There just could be improvements.

Topic Question 2:

There are four main areas. First, the NPS must respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness. Too many are allowed now. Second, routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness must stop. Third, nonconforming structures should be removed and nonconforming uses in potential wilderness within the Park should be stopped, with those areas designated as Wilderness. Fourth, the NPS must ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 267 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 10:45:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am writing to ask the Park Service to:
â€¢ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;
â€¢ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;
â€¢ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.
â€¢ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 268 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 11:15:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The preservation and maintenance of the Yosemite Wilderness character.

Topic Question 2:

Respecting the intent of the Wilderness Act by ensuring that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character.

Comments: I request and encourage the Park Service to respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness; to stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness; to remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

I also request that the Park Service ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for helping preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 269 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 11:50:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

Please stop the routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

Please remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Please ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Please don't fuck this up.

Correspondence ID: 270 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 13:17:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: My husband and I had a wonderful guided tour in Yosemite as part of our honeymoon. Being novice outdoors people we got to see areas of the park we never otherwise would have made it too. We hope you will continue to allow safe, experienced guided tours in the beautiful park!

Correspondence ID: 271 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,22,2016 13:50:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services.
Ensures that alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character.

Topic Question 2:
Routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness.
Removal of non-conforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designation of those areas as Wilderness.
Better management of visitor use of wilderness areas

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 272 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 13:56:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Yosemite is a spectacular wilderness, and it is kept relatively unspoiled through limiting commercial use.

Topic Question 2:
Non-wilderness use threatens the preservation of nature at Yosemite: helicopter use and nonconforming structures should be vastly limited or prohibited.

Comments: I went to Yosemite for the first time a few years ago right after a good snow. It was AMAZING! The pictures that I took, the only thing I took, I might add, were astounding. Chipping away at protections in this environment will only degrade these kinds of experiences to the point of "that was beautiful, except for that one area."

Let there be no caveats to Yosemite's resplendence.

Correspondence ID: 273 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 14:52:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:
Too many visitors.

Set a cap on the number of visitors who can enter the park each day.

Comments:
Please accept these comments on the Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.

The Yosemite Wilderness makes up 94 percent of the Park. The 1964 Wilderness Act states how the Federal government protects our wilderness system. This law defines Wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Wilderness designation forbids federal land management agencies like the Park Service from manipulating or dominating the Wilderness. Federal agencies are required to preserve the wilderness character of Wildernesses.

In 2001, The Pinchot Institute for Conservation report stated:
"Protection of the natural wild, where nature is not controlled, is critical in ensuring that a place is wilderness... if there is a choice between emphasizing naturalness and wildness, stewards should err on the side of wildness."

The Park Service scoping letter describes four issues related to overuse.
I encourage the Park Service to:
Manage visitor use to protect the wilderness as first priority.

Implement a strong and effective process to monitor actions that degrade wilderness, especially use of motorized equipment.

Limit commercial service (guided hiking, climbing, and stock use) in Yosemite National Park.

Stop use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness

Remove nonconforming structures and uses including camping, in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Alternatives should preserve and maintain wilderness character. Natural processes should be allowed to naturally mold the wilderness, without the man-made intervention.

The U.S. has so little wilderness left. The Park Service can lead by example to accept wild places as they are, and to let them be Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 274 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Yosemite is a truly unique & blessed natural wonder. I am delighted that it was determined to be a park for future generations to enjoy & marvel at. I believe the history of the park is very important as well.

Topic Question 2:

I am convinced that the removal of equestrian activities in the park is a huge mistake. Especially considering that before automobiles, equestrians were the only way to see it. The cars are doing more harm than equestrians ever did or will do.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 275 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Things are fine today. I am very concerned about limiting the access for disabled equestrians that use their horse or mule for access to the trails.

Topic Question 2:

Equestrian access should not be limited.

Comments: The Disabled Equestrians Organization (DEO) represents individuals that are moderately disabled and use a horse or mule to provide them access to trails in the outdoors. The causes of their disabilities are varied, and include accidents, old age and disease. Some of the areas affected are knees, lungs, hearts, backs, ankles and eyesight. In spite of the diversity of ailments, they all share a common solution to their disabilities: they use a horse or mule to carry their worn out bodies to the places that millions of Americans enjoy: the beautiful high country of the Sierras, the rolling hills of the California coast, and many other public parks and forests.

It has come to our attention that the Yosemite Wilderness Plan is considering significant reductions in horse and stock usage. I want to remind you that some 30% to 40% of equestrians using these facilities qualify as disabled, and to deny them the right to access Yosemite is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Park Service should instead actively promote the expansion and improvement horse facilities and trails.

Many equestrians use the horse camps at Wawona, Bridalveil and Tuolumne Meadows. Others ride with the commercial packers and get a chance to see the back country on those horses and mules. Others enjoy the trail rides in the Valley. The very minor and limited impacts caused by horses are far outweighed by the enjoyment of the riders. When I have ridden in Yosemite, the children and adults are thrilled to see horses and excited to watch us.

Let us remember that horses and mules have been a part of the history of Yosemite since it was first discovered and dedicated. John Muir rode a horse and used pack mules. Mounted units from the Army patrolled Yosemite for many years. Teddy Roosevelt and many other notable dignitaries used horses to discover the wonders of Yosemite. It is essential to note that the High Sierra Camps are serviced by pack mules, and back country trail maintenance and patrolling are done with horses. The Park Service is obligated to recognize historical usage of stock and how they played an essential role in the creation and support for the Park.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law 101-336 enacted July 26, 1990 and the Department of Justice's regulation implementing title II, subtitle A, of the ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all services, programs, and activities provided to the public by Federal, State and local governments. A disability as defined by ADA is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual. To watch the roar of the falls in Yosemite, see the snow-capped peaks of the high Sierras, watch the Pacific Ocean from high on a bluff above, these are truly a major life activity.

The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 requires all buildings and facilities built or renovated with Federal funds be accessible to and usable by physically disabled persons. This law forms the foundation of the legal mandate requiring federally funded facilities and programs to be accessible to and usable by physically disabled persons.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1978 states "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by Federal financial assistance or by an Executive Agency." This Act further broadens the Architectural Barriers Act in that it requires program accessibility in all services provided with Federal dollars.

To deny disabled equestrians the right to use their horses to access the public trails is a clearly a violation of Federal law and results in discrimination against disabled equestrians. Opportunities for disabled equestrians to enjoy the same sights as able bodied hikers should not be restricted. It is also essential that disabled equestrians have a place to board their horse and park their trailer to unload their horse.

We do not want to see our funds and public funds spend on a lawsuit to enforce our rights. We would rather work with the public agencies to improve the trails, raise funds for outdoor programs, expand horse camps, and raise public awareness. Hopefully this letter will suffice to prevent reduction of horse and stock use by disabled equestrians. Otherwise we will be filing complaints with the Department of Justice and other agencies responsible for insuring compliance with Federal and State laws.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 276 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 16:55:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Its wild side but it could be improved

Topic Question 2:

Please,

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 277 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 17:36:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:
Proper funding to improve and maintain the park and facilities.

Comments: â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for taking action to help preserve the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 278 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 19:27:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Much of the area has remained wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

1 - Commercial services within the Park should be limited

2 - Routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment should be stopped

3 - Nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park should be removed and those areas should be designated as "Wilderness"

4 - Visitor use should be better managed so that natural processes are allowed to define the character of the wilderness. The wilderness character of the Park should be preserved and maintained.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 279 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 19:57:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Does a good job of balancing access for all through the high Sierra camps, commercial guides and groups, and the Ostrander hut with other wilderness values such as wildlife and solitude.

Topic Question 2:

Reduction of pack stock impacts and continued management of trailhead quotas to maintain opportunities for solitude.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 280 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

â€ I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

â€ I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

â€ Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

â€ I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

â€ I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

â€ I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country

Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

⌘ In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

⌘ In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

⌘ In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

⌘ Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

⌘ Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

⌘ The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

⌘

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

⌘

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

⌘

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: Many years ago I visited Yosemite and had the good fortune to travel by mule to the base of Half Dome. It was an experience I will never forget. Now that I am older there is no question that if I want to visit wilderness areas in Yosemite National Park, I would need the assistance of a horse or mule. The historical use of stock in wilderness areas makes such an experience even more special. Please consider use of stock in this place that is heaven on earth.

Correspondence ID: 281 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 20:20:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

To me keeping the wilderness open to stock working together with other user groups is important for the long term .

Topic Question 2:

Educating lnt to all user groups to in joy for generations

Comments: It is our goal and dream to retire and travel to as many parks, nat. Forests, and wilderness as we can. We have dedicated our spare time to keeping areas of natural beauty as God created for us to enjoy. And more than just enjoy to revitalize our souls. Might sound corny but it is facts

Correspondence ID: 282 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the National Park Service has managed Yosemite Wilderness so that it can still be accessed by hikers, backpackers, horse and mule riders and packers. I am a former California resident who has traveled many miles through Yosemite and other wilderness areas. Now I am no longer able to backpack very far, and so ride more. When I was younger and backpacking more, it was rather thrilling to encounter a pack string or individual riders, because of the historical connotations reminiscent of early explorers of the area. Also, the stock users I have encountered are usually much more aware and careful to maintain the areas they use. All have been polite and willing or eager to explain trail usage and environmental maintenance. In contrast, many backpackers were often uninformed and uncaring about those issues.

Topic Question 2:

Now I see a lot of pressure to reduce access for all but hikers, backpackers, and runners (who seem to place little value on the aesthetics of the area in effort to achieve faster and faster times). This seems to be an issue now for all wilderness areas, as stock users become rarer and rarer. I am afraid of losing an important part of our heritage, as well as limiting access to a few selective groups.

I have seen a lot more damage done by mountain bikes than by stock, but I don't know enough about mountain bike restrictions. They don't seem to belong in wilderness areas, to me, but I base that opinion on personal encounters, which have been mostly very unpleasant and intrusive.

Comments: Because of the value in encountering different modes of usage, I would hate to have to see separate trails constructed for different users, but wilderness areas should remain accessible to all natural, historical modes of travel.

Correspondence ID: 283 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the long established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in the park and I wish to see this continue. Being on horseback in the park is an experience that cannot be replicated. Using horses or mules may be the only means for aged or mobility impaired to see the park. Animals can carry us to sites we may not be able to reach by hiking.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with the current management of the park.

Topic Question 2:

I understand the rate of reported conflict between hikers/backpackers and stock users is relatively low. As Back Country Horsemen we work to minimize visitor conflict in wilderness. We do this with education and leave no trace techniques.

BCH is available to help provide education beneficial to all users of trails.

Access to Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. the WSP should consider and make efforts to accommodate stock users who do not enter park wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. There is a need for adequate trailer parking at trailheads and camping areas for those who haul their own horses and mules.

The park service may soon find that resources needed for trail maintenance are not sufficient. Therefore, I suggest enlisting the help of partners in routine trail maintenance. For instance a formal partnership with Back Country Horsemen and its partner the Pacific Crest Trail Association may be beneficial.

I also suggest partnership with BCH to provide education in regards to equine leave no trace program. I have been impacted by this program and practice its tenets wherever I take my horses.

Comments: I was a charter member of Twin Rivers BCH in Idaho. BCH has provided education regarding leave no trace camping with horses and BCH members have spent many hours working on trails locally and in the National Forests. We have cut brush, packed and installed water bars, constructed hitching rails, cleaned campsites, conducted weed studies, rolled up wire fencing. Where there was a need, we fulfilled the need and enabled continued use of the trails for all users.

Stock use is historical in the wilderness and should be continued for generations to come.

While I have not yet been to Yosemite, I would appreciate knowing the trails are kept open to stock use. Thank you for taking my comments.

Correspondence ID: 284 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 21:54:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

No comment

Topic Question 2:

Unfortunately, Yosemite, along with many other public lands, is under assault from many directions, including our own congress on behalf of corporate interests, including ranchers wanting to graze their cattle, oil companies wanting to drill for oil and gas, mining companies, and others. We must continue to avoid and reject these different entities due to their destructive nature and the resulting decimation of our pristine national treasures.

Comments: Yosemite National Park (YNP) is accepting public scoping comments on its Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement until 1/29/16. The I understand that Yosemite Wilderness is 704,000 acres and makes up 94 percent of the Park and that the Park Service has raised four issues in the scoping letter-visitor use and capacity, stock use, trail management, and commercial services. These are important issues that are all related to overuse.

I would like to encourage the Park Service to do the following:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 285 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It is a beautiful park, with many varied experiences available from just driving through, to simple hikes, guided hikes, longer hikes. I very much hope to someday bring my horses to Yosemite and ride. I have been riding in a different national park or monument each year.

Topic Question 2:

All wilderness areas including Yosemite have the potential to be loved to death. For horse packers, impact can be minimized by either spreading them out (encouraging lighter use of many areas), or by concentrating the use to a few areas (creating nice camping spots in areas with water and grazing, and encouraging that use through signage, conveniences such as bear boxes and permanent high lines, etc.) Encouraging horse groups to assist with maintenance and letting people know they are doing this (signs on kiosks, etc.) creates a sense of personal 'ownership' and shared responsibility (and peer pressure!).

In areas with heavy use, it is really nice to have parallel but not identical trails for stock and people. This is particularly useful the first short distance from the stock trailhead. Most animals poop in the first little ways when they get started on a trail, so if we can have a mile or so of trail before reaching the people trailhead, they are usually a lot happier with us!

Education about best practices and what is expected for 'leave no trace' is also helpful. This can be signage, a pamphlet handed out with maps when you pay for entrance fees or camping fees, and getting the local horse community involved in sharing the training at whatever events they normally attend (we have a local horse expo, for instance, and always have leave no trace booths and activities there). This doesn't take care of people from out of town like me, unless we also have leave no trace training at home (which we do). When you go to Bryce, for instance, the ranger has to specifically check in horses and check their paperwork. He also discusses any specific problems they are having (such as cutting trail corners) at that time. Friendly, caring discussion goes a long way.

In order to ask horse people to help out, perhaps you could have an annual Yosemite packers project, and publicize in advance a project or projects that horse people /packers could come help with. I'd especially enjoy doing something like that, and then riding a few days afterwards. It would feel very worthwhile to make the drive if I knew there was a good service project I could help with, enjoy the community of horse people from different places, and ride the park as well.

Comments: I look forward to one day riding in Yosemite, preferably packing in to the back country for several days. It is also a dream of mine to ride the Pacific Crest trail when I finally get to retire. That will be a treat for getting 'old'!

Please keep this beautiful area open to horses and stock use.

Thank you,
Dr. Cynthia Furse

P.S. - - I heard about this document from an email sent around to Back Country Horsemen chapters. Thanks for sharing.

Correspondence ID: 286 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 02:32:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The Guided Tour Companies!

Topic Question 2:
Keeping our National Parks Open & Useable!

Comments: 1/22/16
To Whom it May Concern;

This letter is in reference to your reevaluation process that would limit guided tour companies from your park system. I strongly disagree and am seriously disappointed in your decision even to consider this. I have been a backpacker/hiker for many years and have hiked with several tour companies to several national park destinations including Yosemite, Yellowstone, The Grand Canyon, and the Zion. I am, in fact, booked to backpack with the Wildland Trekking Company again next spring in the Great Smokey Mountains.

When I go backpacking in our precious national parks, I want to book with a guided tour company because of the obvious dangers of hiking alone, combined with the fabulous experience and knowledge as well as history I gain with them. I would not even think of visiting the national parks on a multi-day hike without joining a guided tour company like Wildland Trekking Co.. I learn geologic and natural, as well as human impact history, not to mention backpacking experience when I connect with a guided tour company. I have learned the meaning of the word re-wild from them, which is what, I believe, is part of the vision of the national parks. I never would have gained half of the awareness I now possess about the national parks without them. They provide safety and education of our stewardship, geology, geography, knowledge of the wildlife, and a wealth of understanding about the area. Our campsites are always in designated areas and low impact oriented. I cannot imagine visiting the national parks without the plethora of information of the guided tour companies. They take us to the high and low impact areas of the parks and limiting the movement of these prized companies is ludicrous. They deserve at least the same if not much better treatment that non-guided visitors get to our invaluable treasured parks.

These guided tour companies are not your enemies, but your best friends. They help our priceless national parks more than you could ever imagine and to limit their entry into your park is preposterous. Please reconsider your decree. They are an esteemed and integral part of those parks and without them, I for one, will not be visiting the parks and would lose an immense amount of knowledge, safety, history and value. The guiding companies bring our irreplaceable national parks to life. In short, the guiding companies, and Wildland Trekking in particular, are as exceptional and invaluable as the parks themselves.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 287 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The access to the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:
Continued access for horsemen in this backcountry.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 288 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 05:05:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I like the wild character of the wilderness. For me, true wilderness means the absence of man and mankind's impact. Therefore, other than a trail in the dirt, I do not like to see any structures, hear any sounds other than those created by nature over time.

Topic Question 2:
First, I think we need to respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness. This is primary for me.

I would stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness. Only exceptional use to save a life. Natural solitude is something only wilderness provides.

I would remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness. I think wilderness quality lands should be protected now and forever.

Finally, when looking at alternatives, each should ensure that they preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments: Thank you for allowing me to comment and I truly feel the our National Parks and our wilderness areas to be the greatest legacy we leave future generations.

Correspondence ID: 289 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

â€I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

â€Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

â€I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

â€I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:
I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.
â€In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.
â€In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.
â€In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.
â€Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.
â€Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.
â€The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.
â€

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: We need to get our children out of the house and into the wilderness. On a horse would even be better!

Correspondence ID: 290 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,23,2016 05:46:31

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Allowing the use of chainsaws in Wilderness areas. Trails cannot be maintained with hand saws.

As a volunteer in the National forest and state park in South Carolina I understand the importance of using the proper tools when maintaining trails.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 291 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Riding horses in the Yosemite Wilderness fits with the Wilderness character of the region. Equestrian access was vital to the discovery of the area in the past, and should remain available for future generations to explore. Developing a love & respect for our Wild places is important for Americans and being able to ride in to see them in the historic manner of our forefathers will help develop that.

Topic Question 2:

Reduced budgets & increased visitor access can squeeze management into capacity problems. Willing volunteer partners stand ready to help on that front (Back Country Horsemen, Pacific Coast Trail). With utilizing this shovel ready, trained body of volunteers, management can proactively address user conflict issues, trail maintenance problems and increase the interpretive needs by bringing education & understanding to those who visit the Wilderness, either on foot or on horseback.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 292 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

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Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	293	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan,23,2016 07:34:03				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a disabled rider that cannot hike in the back country any more, the only way I can go is on horse or mule. I have camped at Yosemite for years and wish to continue to do so. Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

Topic Question 2:

*In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

*Plus, The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally

maintained.

*Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: The Beauty of Yosemite and all NPS is beyond words. Please before cutting off access to the backcountry from horses and mules please please consider this there are many folks that can't hike the only way we can see the beauty is to ride on safe equine. Please don't take away our access from riding the back country trails. Plus in working with Back Country Horsemen of America you can tap into a trained volunteer organization that will cut the cost of maintenance, which in these trying times is a blessing in itself. God Bless America, our public lands and our public employees.

Correspondence ID: 294 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

We value access to all outstanding, historic, & all special places. I especially value horse access to these as am now approaching 75 years of age.

Topic Question 2:

Preservation of the wonders of Yosemite for now and future generations and balance that with misuse by a few. BCH has been an supporter & advocate for many years of all our national parks. Horseback visitation opportunities MUST be preserved!

Comments: BCH is a companion and helper in the efforts to preserve our parks.

Correspondence ID: 295 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 08:10:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It has been managed pretty well/user groups have been respectful of each other & our lands. i'm concerned about the "wilderness" designation limiting necessary maintenance because of the lack of equipment whose use could benefit the enviro 7 us.

Topic Question 2:

Working with the "wilderness" designation. This is public land & it should be for public use including all historical uses with pack stock and equestrians in general.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 296 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think the National Park Service has demonstrated excellence and a high level of competence over many years in the way they have managed the Yosemite Wilderness.

The fact that they have maintained the area and managed the varied challenges while seeing budget cuts and pressure from special interests to change their proven practices speaks volumes to their abilities and professionalism.

Topic Question 2:

My opinion is most important issue is the potential for conflict between hikers and occasional visitors to the area with the pack and saddle stock user of the wilderness.

Resolution will involve deliberate and consistent education of the various users, both on an individual and collective basis.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 297 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 08:36:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

NPS is doing a great job of keeping the casual tourist out of the wilderness areas. The Yosemite Valley is a treasure that most people can understand and delight in- yet the wilderness, more difficult to access, has been preserved for those who are interested in a different experience. Exploration of the back country has historically included horse and mule riding and packing. It enables a different clientele to enjoy equally the different scenery and geology of the "true" Sierras.

Topic Question 2:

Anyone who has been to Yosemite immediately sees the problems related to large numbers of visitors over loving the Valley. Perhaps the elimination of vehicles, other than propane bus service, is the only solution that will be able to solve some of the issues currently evident. Another problem with which I am familiar is the smog which ruins the visibility and causes severe problems to those with lung problems. Camp fires are a menace to visitors- you don't need a 20 foot high flaming fire to enjoy the ambiance!!!!

Comments: The issue of private stock owners, riders, and users is being discussed all over the US wilderness. The elimination of independent riders in moderate numbers (10 heart beat rule in Rocky Mountain National Park) should be considered as an affront to the historical usage of our public lands. Many of us enjoy days of careful, considerate, controlled usage in the open country of our nation. What people object to in public land use by equines is the deep rut, dusty, precipitous trail with pools of urine and poop that is so frequently seen. I object to it too, but it is not the single horse rider that creates this situation- it is the pack station/tourist stable that uses the same trails over and over, day after day, year after year. Many riders on many horses taking many

trips over the same terrain is the culprit- -not casual small groups of enthusiasts.

I love Yosemite but I have not yet had the opportunity to ride the back country there (gonna try this summer) as I have in Rocky and other Colorado mountain areas. Here the trails are clearly marked and maintained, the rules are clear and well stated, we are, at this time, being respected and are, in turn, respecting our heritage as horse riders, citizens of the US, and the inheritors of the American West.

Correspondence ID: 298 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Do not really know much about this issue, have always been pleased with my several visits to the Park since the 70's and on.

Topic Question 2:

Pressure. Pressure from people. Use arguments. Changing demographics that want to limit or eliminate certain groups. What is the best way to use the park? On foot with no motorized or wheeled vehicles except on the road through the park.

Comments: I am a stock owner and trail rider. I have ridden the fringes of the Sierras surrounding the Yosemite Wilderness. It is spectacular and wild, but over crowded with many people and trash anymore. I am disturbed that the National Park Service has limited the use of pack stock in this area. This practice needs to be reversed and the Backcountry Horsemen groups need to partner with the National Park Service to assist in trail maintenance and trail education to those that would otherwise destroy the wilderness. Backcountry Horsemen are active in Leave No Trace practices and are instrumental in educating the public regarding pack stock, appropriate trail development and maintenance, public education and more. We are for the wilderness experience and back to basics use of Forests and Natural areas vs the motorized rampage that is occurring in so many places. Backcountry horsemen will assist in Search & Rescue, packing in material for trail maintenance, packing out wounded hikers, assisting in fire mitigation and fish stocking. I am afraid the Park Services everywhere are opting out of this traditional method of Park maintenance and services for the faster, quicker noisier way of helicopter and motorized equipment to service our National Parks. This needs to be halted. I hope to see more naturalized parks in my future vs the trend of going "modern". Its not what the Parks are about in my opinion.

Correspondence ID: 299 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the way in which The National Park Service listens to varied comments and realizes that many and varied interests are involved in caring for and protecting the Yosemite Wilderness. As a horsemen of over 65 years some of which I spent horseback in Yosemite in the 1960's,I appreciate the opportunities to view and experience the beauty and awesome wonders of Yosemite. Previous to my visits, John Muir and President Theodore Roosevelt visited Yosemite horseback.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues facing Yosemite today is climate change and overcrowding. It is imperative that Yosemite's beauty be protected by a largely oblivious population, how do we do this without limiting access to Yosemite? I have witnessed overzealous rangers harassing people for perceived infractions that might occur. That is a good thing, I guess as dealing with the public day after day after day is not easy. Though some would liken them to Nazi storm troopers.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 300 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly

swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

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In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	301	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan,23,2016 09:36:06				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

☞ I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

☞ I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

☞ Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

☞ I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

☞ I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

☞ I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

☞ In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

☞ In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

☞ In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

☞ Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

☞ Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

â€ The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

â€ Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

â€ The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

â€ Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I am an active member of BCHA. My wife and I love to trail ride all over the US. We believe the BCHA is an organization that can help protect our Wilderness areas while showing how horse and mule riders can utilize Wilderness areas with little or no impact. We have had the pleasure of riding some of the Wilderness areas in the US and look forward to riding and exploring many more. Please consider the above comments and we look forward to working together to keep Wilderness areas open to foot traffic and livestock use. Remember, these Wilderness areas cannot be maintained without the use of livestock pack animals. Thank You, Jim Thomas

Correspondence ID: 302 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

1.Pack and saddle stock has been historic and traditional in all NPS, including Yosemite.(YNP) This tradition should continue in an unconfined manner.
2.Stock use can and should, in the future, be used for transport of people and goods, whenever possible, to minimize the impact of mechanized transport.
3. Visiting YNP may be difficult/impossible for some people that may have physical impairments, and stock may be the manner in which they can enjoy this treasure.

Topic Question 2:

1. If areas of YNP are seeing impacted stock use mitigation measures should be used to include trail re-routes, hardening sites or providing alternate sites. This would prevent stock limitations
2. Leave No Trace training is available in California, as well as other states. California is a Master Trainer for LNT and it is administered via BCHC.
Both park personal, park foot traffic, and stock users would use this education to the benefit of YNP.
3.Changes to policy use should only come after peer review of scientific study.
4.Access to YNP should be improved to disperse use and lessen impact, confusion, and user conflict.
5.User/stock conflict can be mitigated by education of both hikers and stock users. Information could be handed out at entrances ,trail heads and other recreation sites.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 303 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 10:18:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that it is there and available to me. I am a trail rider - elderly - and probably would not be able to hike the wilderness. I have been riding for many years in all sorts of terrain including other wilderness designations such the Alpine Wilderness in Washington. I find that I always receive a positive reception to others users I meet on the trail. I think the increasing urbanization of the population creates a need in city folk to be in touch with nature. When they stop to pet my horse I see such pleasure on their faces. On my bucket list is a group trail ride and camp out in the park. Also on my list is to ride the Pacific Crest Trail from Yosemite to Snowqualmie Pass Wa.

Topic Question 2:

The most important is keeping it open - by proper funding. It is a national treasure and must be available for future generations as our country becomes more and more crowded. Some of the overlooked aspects of stock management is that they require open space - that is they need hay, open fields and pastures - no matter where that open space is. This contributes to a lessening of CO2 emissions and puts a drag on climate change. All use of grazing animals should be encouraged.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 304 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The chance to have public input on issues facing the use of the park it self.

Topic Question 2:

The main issue to me is access by my only way to get around.

Comments: I'm a member of a great organization that not only teaches many people with horses and mules how to tread lightly, Pack it in pack it out. My main way to access any back country is by horse. In Feb. 1997 I was in a bad accident logging where I had a tree come down on me breaking my back and my right leg in six places. Doctors were amazed I wasn't dead and that I was not paralyzed from the waste down. I have a six inch plate in my back and leg.

I can not carry a pack that weights more then about ten to fifteen pounds so overnight camping is out so I use a pack horse.

I have been in the back country of Washington, Idaho, Montana, Ore. and Wyoming. Taking in the great sites in Wilderness areas in all of the mentioned states.

I know that there is many people just like me and we should all be able to use these areas even if we have limitations.

Thank You

Ronny K Markus

Correspondence ID: 305 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 11:19:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I love that it's available to all. Yosemite is a magical place and everyone should be able to enjoy and experience it.

Topic Question 2:

I was informed that some possible changes are going to be made limiting guided tours in the backcountry of Yosemite. I had an amazing experience at Yosemite over this last summer and it was made possible by taking a guided backpacking tour through wildland trekking. I had never been backpacking didn't have anybody to go with and didn't have any of the gear or knowledge needed. By taking this guided trip through Yosemite my passion for nature and backpacking and preservation was sparked. As a young woman I know that it is not safe to go on such adventures alone but going on a guided trip as I did provided me the safety I needed. My guide educated us so much on the natural history of Yosemite and also on the land and wildlife and different geological phenomenas. I strongly feel that my experience in Yosemite was greatly enriched by having a very knowledgeable guide. He brought me to a greater understanding and respect for the park then I would have on my own. As I said before the greatest thing about Yosemite is that its beauty is available to all. But for me the backcountry is what is most beautiful. But the back country would not have been accessible to me without a guided tour. Companies like wildland trekking enable so many people to enjoy all of the wonderful things that nature has to offer that they would be unable to on their own. I strongly believe that guided tours should not be limited to where they can take groups and the size of the group, within reason, as long as the patrons are properly educated on how to respect the wilderness and backcountry.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 306 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I admire the management and staff for preserving one of the most magnificent National Parks. I believe that some restrictions on heart beats and use are necessary but they need to include all users.

You have a difficult task of balancing the wants of many user groups.

Topic Question 2:

Educate all users as to the history of the wilderness. In that the original users and the construction of the trails were done using horses and mules.

That stock animals pack down the tread and make it solid with their weight. In some fragile areas they may cause some damage but, overall the advantages outweigh the negatives. We as stock people also pack out others garbage.

Comments: I have hiked the high country of Yosemite south past and to the top of Half Dome. Trekked the north side from Lake Tenaya all around Tuolumne Meadows from Mono Pass and Cathedral Lakes to Gaylor Lakes and the Glen Aulin and it's magnificent falls. As I look forward to retirement I also look toward the tome to once again rediscover the Yosemite I know and love every summer when I was young.

With age I have had to ride a mule in the high country. To see the back country of Yosemite is a dream the I can only do now on my mule.

We are active in the Mt. Rainier National park, packing in supplies for the trail maintenance crews and packing out garbage. We are also actively involved with Pacific Crest Trail Assiation, Washington Trails Association and the National Forrest Service. We coordinate and work with all users to achieve the goal of keeping trails open for everyone. Our chapter of Back Country Horsemen alone put in over 3000 hours last year on trail maintenance.

If we work together, governmental staff and all user groups, the dream of hiking, riding & biking the high country will be alive for future generations.

Lastly please keep the Park open to stock users.

Correspondence ID: 307 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 15:22:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

For the backcountry I believe the quota system works really well. it is keeping each of the trails and campgrounds from being overused and allows a visitor to experience solitude and quiet places without too many people.

I am also a huge fan of the High Sierra Camps and would like to see them included officially in any new plan. They provide great value for people who are not able to carry a full load of food and equipment to go on solo backcountry hikes. There is some impact, especially from the pack horses, but considering the vastness and size of Yosemite, this is limited to a very small portion of the land and has minimal impact. I appreciate how thoughtful the camps are managed, limiting visitors in each camp carefully, and providing an amazing service in the backcountry.

Topic Question 2:

The experience of Yosemite Valley is no joy for me, car and bus traffic plus the vast number of visitors at any time make it anything but a peaceful enjoyable experience. I would like to see private cars banned and replaced either with a light rail system, electric buses or some way of public transportation that is gentler on the land and allows for a more peaceful, nature inspired visit, even if it means reducing the number of visitors at any time.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 308 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
We would like to keep access to the Wilderness Areas on Horseback.

Comments: We make it a point to ride our horses in Wilderness Parks. We takes trip each Summer to different National Parks and ride for a week in the back country. This fills our soul and takes us through another year. Please don't take that away from us.

Thank you,

Gary and Elayne Sorensen

Correspondence ID: 309 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 16:15:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Regarding the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

- 1) Respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness
- 2) Stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness
- 3) Ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank You!

Bonnie MacRaith

Correspondence ID: 310 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 16:46:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
This wilderness needs to retain the traditional use of equestrian use and pack stock use as it is now.

Topic Question 2:

Trail maintenance, accessible trail heads for equestrian use and pack stock.

Comments: I think that Back Country Horsemen are perfectly capable of maintaining and building trails and trail heads to the Park Service's specifications.

Correspondence ID: 311 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I appreciate that the use of horses and pack stock are allowed while preserving the wilderness aspects of the Park. Horses are part of the heritage of the west and allow exploration in a natural way.

Topic Question 2:

I suspect one important aspect is trail maintenance. Groups such as Backcountry Horsemen can assist with this, especially in regard to moving needed equipment and supplies without need of motorized vehicles.

Comments: Although I do not live in this area, I have visited Yosemite several times. It is a beautiful park and I know the valley has overuse issues. I support your efforts to maintain wilderness in the Park. I hope you will continue to allow horses and pack animals so those of us who value the "old" way of traversing land by horseback can continue to do so.

Correspondence ID: 312 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,23,2016 17:54:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

â€ I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

â€ I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

â€ Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

â€ I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

â€ I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

â€ I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

â€ In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

â€ In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

â€ In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

â€ Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

â€ Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

â€ The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

â€ Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for persons who haul their own horses and mules.

â€ The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

â€ Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I feel that it would be a shame not to allow stock use on the trails. There would be quite a few people that would never be able to see the nor enjoy the majestic splendor of the back country.

Correspondence ID:	313	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan,23,2016 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I hope to someday see Yosemite Wilderness from my horse and mules. I am glad the park service maintains the trails and manages the resource with historic and primitive tools. This country was settled with horses and mules and they are still a great resource for maintaining the wilderness with minimal impact. I value the experience of primitive and wide open space provided by the park management of the Yosemite Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Trail maintenance to the highest user standard.

Resource degradation.

Partnership with user groups for advice and volunteer labor.

User conflicts.

Policy & Rules.

Comments: 1. Building and maintaining trails to the highest user standard is the most efficient and cost less long term. If a trail is not maintained to stock standards, it can be degraded much faster and become difficult for all users. A good trail is easier to maintain and provides rapid access for emergency and fire crews. It also makes a better fire break. It is more enjoyable for users.

2. Water crossings, lake shores and meadows can be degraded by heavy use. Remedial fixes should be based on scientific studies. Not biases, prejudices and opinions. Singling out one group with onerous restrictions or exclusions based on a hunch is not good stewardship.

3. User groups should have input into planning and decisions. Volunteer groups, such as Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA), have a lot of experience and knowledge to lend land managers from an equestrian point of view. Our organization practices Leave No Trace and has a go easy on the land ethic. We love and value the wilderness for ourselves and generations to follow. BCHA has volunteered thousands of hours of labor and moved hundreds of tons of material with pack stock for public agencies.

4. Conflicts should be addressed by education. This could be literature teaching trail and backcountry etiquette and trailhead signage. Volunteer groups working together can form better understanding and appreciation for the other groups perspective.

5. To reiterate, Back Country Horsemen of America would like to be involved and represented in decisions that effect the continued and historical use of horses and pack stock on public lands.

Correspondence ID: 314 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate that Yosemite National Park is open for stock pack use. My spouse and I enjoy exploring the public lands by horseback. In a few years, when we are able to retire, we plan to travel the country with horses and pack through as many areas as possible. I certainly hope that Yosemite will still be available for that use. Exploring wilderness areas by horseback provides a unique experience which cannot be duplicated in any other way. Exploring the areas by backpack would come close. I have been fortunate enough to ride in some of the areas that I have previously backpacked and the two experiences are similar but different.

While I am in good shape for my age, I would however, be very limited in my ability to get deep into the wilderness areas by foot alone. I expect that this same problem exists for backpackers of all ages. There is a practical limit to what a backpacker can carry. This is why pack stock is often used to take backpackers into wilderness areas to set up base camps from which they can explore. Pack animals can also carry base camp supplies for workers who are performing maintenance in wilderness areas. While it is true that helicopters can often carry these same supplies and get there faster, helicopters ruin the wilderness experience for users who are there to get away from modern civilization. I believe that helicopters should be used in wilderness areas only in emergency situations.

Escape from modern civilization now and then is something that many of us need to keep our minds clear. Riding through the wilderness with everything you need with you is a very liberating experience. The beauty of the national parks provides a much needed breath of fresh air. During the day, you ride along and enjoy the breath taking scenery. Then, you set up camp, cook your supper and enjoy a campfire, then crawl into your tent when darkness sets or maybe stay up a little longer and study the stars and constellations in the night sky. The next morning, you pack up and move on to do it all again. This is what it must have been like for the early settlers. I am so glad that we still have the ability to experience this in this world of high tech hustle and bustle.

Topic Question 2:

California is a long way from North Carolina. Yet, the issues that we are dealing with in our public lands are much the same. The major issues of concern seem to be funding and user conflicts. It is the first of these two issues that got me involved with Back Country Horsemen. Over the last decade or two, an already underfunded national parks and forest system has become even more underfunded. I recognize that the only way that the wonderful system of trails in our public lands can be maintained is through volunteer efforts. Fortunately, there are many of us in the trail riding community that are willing to put hours into trail maintenance. My spouse and I are currently in the process of signing up to help with the annual spring trail clearing in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. Every year, a large number of volunteers take time off of work to ride the trails and clear downed trees and limbs during the two week "chainsaw window" so that the trails will be open to visitors through the park season. Carrying tools into the woods on horseback is much easier than by hand or in backpacks and much more distance can be covered in a day when we are riding instead of hiking. During other times of the year, we do similar work in the National Forest.

The other big issue that seems to garner a lot of attention is user conflicts. Public lands should be open for everyone to enjoy. Back Country Horsemen realize that we must use responsible "leave no trace" principles while using the public lands just as everyone else should. Educating all equestrian trail users about these principles is an important mission for our group. While horses often get blamed for trail damage, it is usually the trail and not the user, that is the problem. Some trails are not built in a sustainable manner. Others have lasted for decades and stayed in very good shape despite significant use by both hikers and horseback riders. Back Country Horsemen would rather see trails re-routed or redesigned for better sustainability than to have them simply shut down.

User conflicts are best addressed by education. Signage explaining trail etiquette and especially WHY these rules are important should be placed at every trail head. While hikers are supposed to yield to horses, riders should be aware that some hikers are afraid of horses. There may be times when the rider should dismount and stand between his horse and the hiker. Everyone should be made aware that courtesy and safety are more important than steadfast rules. Having been a backpacker once, I can appreciate the emotions that might go through a hiker's head when a group of large animals comes along behind them. At the same time, I have witnessed horses get jittery when approached by human like creatures with large things sticking out over their heads. Educating the hikers that they need to speak to the animals and let them know they are not predators is important too.

Finally, I would like to address special needs that horseback riders have with regards to parking. My spouse and I made a three day pack trip into a National Park in Virginia this past fall. We were allowed to park in the backpacker's parking lot. Fortunately, all we had were our mounts. We did not have a pack animal so we were only pulling a two horse trailer. We were able to discreetly squeeze into an area in the edge of the parking lot where we could get our animals out and have room to move around the trailer without blocking other users. Had we been planning a longer trip and felt the need to bring a pack animal, a larger trailer would have been required and it would have been difficult for us to get parked without blocking other users. Some attention to parking for larger horse trailers is almost essential to allowing private horseback riders access to the wilderness areas. Any consideration in this regard would be appreciated.

Comments: As a small business owner (veterinarian) and member of non-profit boards (Humane Society and Back Country Horsemen), I have seen first hand the impact that our changing economy has had on people's (and government's) ability to contribute financially in the areas which are important to them. Continued maintenance of our national parks will require public/private cooperation. Partnering with groups like Back Country Horsemen will help the park service to deal with budget shortfalls.

All of us who enjoy the outdoors have a shared interest in keeping public lands open and available. We all need to band together to work towards that end. When dealing with differing views on user impacts and how to resolve them, it is important that unbiased studies using sound scientific evidence be used rather than opinions of one user group or the other. I hope that the park service will keep these things in mind while designing the current Wilderness Stewardship plan.

Correspondence ID: 315 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

For 38 years, I have taken people horseback riding on back country trails in National, State and privately owned forests. I am a horse owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness with my family on our pack and saddle horses.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle horses and mules in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. Additionally, for visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze horses and mules in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I am in full agreement with statements written by the Backcountry Horsemen of America, California, and will here quote from their statement:

â€ I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

â€ In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

â€ In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

â€ In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

â€ Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

â€ Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

â€ The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

â€ Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.â€

â€ The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.â€

â€ Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.â€

Comments: Horseback riders are among the most devoted stewards of our National and State lands. We will actively work with the U.S. Forest Service to preserve the Yosemite wilderness so that future generations can experience the grandeur and have their souls lifted as few experiences in this modern world can do.

Correspondence ID: 316 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

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In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 317 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.23,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

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Topic Question 2:

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Comments:

Correspondence ID: 318 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 319 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,24,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

I am writing to submit my personal comments as to how I feel the Yosemite Wilderness in Yosemite National Park should be managed in the future.

Among other things, I believe that the routine use of helicopters and other mechanized equipment should be eliminated in this and other wilderness areas in our nation because this goes against the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act. Also, I believe that commercial enterprises and services should be kept to a minimum or even eliminated altogether in Yosemite and other wilderness areas. I also believe that all existing structures and nonconforming uses be abolished in potential wilderness areas and that these potential wilderness areas be upgraded to full-fledged wilderness areas. I believe also that all alternatives conform to the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act. I would also like to comment on my views regarding hunting, which I understand is permitted in wilderness areas. On this subject, I would like to comment by saying that I believe that hunting should be restricted to those species which can be personally consumed for food and that all mammalian carnivores such as bobcats, mountain lions, foxes, coyotes, martens, fishers, wolverines, etc. be off limits to hunting. This would also include gray wolves should they ever be reintroduced to the Yosemite Wilderness Area. Thank you for reading my

comments and for your consideration of my views.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 320 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 00:46:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

What I value most is the fact that the National Park Service is working at solving problems rather than trying to eliminate problems through restrictions. By the wilderness act, the Yosemite Wilderness is open to stock, pack stock, hikers, campers and commercial operations and is necessary for all these users with the demand on the land by recreationalist and it is being provided. I am a pack stock user and it is not possible to put a value on the experiences that are afforded me on Wilderness trips.

Topic Question 2:

Visitor Use and Capacity

I think the most important issue is the lack of funding to provide the level of expectations a person has when they go to a wilderness area. There should be no reduction in quotas. They should be increased. Break the wilderness in to areas and post the numbers of users in each area daily. Users will go to the less traveled areas if they want some solitude. Educate users on what they should expect to meet on trails.

Stock Use

I commend NPS for not micro managing stock users. Scientific and use data needs collected before any changes are made to the management of, private, commercial, and NPS stock. A possible education tool could be an online video watched at home or on site that was required watching and after watching, a dated card could be issue that all stock users as well as hikers had to have on their person. I experience this in Oregon dealing with bats in caves. There needs to be adequate parking at trail heads for stock use. Do not restrict grazing. Even though certified feed is required, the less feed that is packed in, the less chance of non-native plants being introduced, plus no grazing increases the amount of stock needed and compounds the impact on trails. Continue to use NPS stock for trail maintenance. It is well documented that the level of trail maintenance deteriorates rapidly when the stock is eliminated. The pack stock is also a great educational tool as well as preserving the historical use of pack stock on public lands.

Trail Management

Education for foot and stock users is essential to stop off trail travel for all users other than access to water or camping areas. Trails need maintained to the level of use. Maintenance deficiencies need repaired immediately on heavily used trails, as the impact will destroy a trail requiring expensive rebuilding. High maintenance costs sections of trail should be the first to be rebuilt. There is usually a reason trails are seldom used, lack of maintenance. The more trails that are open, the better chance to spread out the use and provide a more rewarding experience for the users. No trails should be closed without going through the public process. Better utilize volunteers for education and trail maintenance.

Commercial Services

The wilderness act addresses commercial operations and they need to be provided. Many users can not afford owning their own stock but love riding. Many elderly and handicapped cannot walk to access the beauty of wilderness. The existing commercial operators need to have a discussion with NPS about needs versus wants. There has to be a balance so all can make a comfortable living.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 321 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 11:50:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Open to all users employing appropriate backcountry/LNT techniques. I would be disappointed if traditional pack and saddle livestock use was restricted, especially given the dedicated volunteerism exhibited by Backcountry Horsemen of America and similar organizations.

Topic Question 2:

I suspect Yosemite's Wilderness issues mirror those of many/most other Parks and National Forests: insufficient funding to adequately maintain quality sites and facilities! That is one reason I hope Yosemite Park staff will embrace those users groups willing to work as partners. As a fed. land manager, I truly understand the challenges. Over the years, I have consistently found that working with user groups leads to much better results than turning them away.

Comments: Hang in there. These Plans can be harrowing experiences; don't let the negative comments deter you from doing the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run. Doing the right thing for the right reason is never wrong.... i.e can you explain it to your mother? :)

Correspondence ID: 322 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 12:35:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

⌘ I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

⌘ I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

⌘ Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

⌘ I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

⌘ I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

â€ I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

â€ In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

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Comments:

Correspondence ID: 323 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

It would be devastating to our organization if historical access to Yosemite Park was denied to trail horses and/or pack mules. We promote and practice Leave No Trace packing while joyfully communing with your divine national park. Our presence does no harm to trails like the slick "v"s created by bicycles. We've seen too much of that damage here in Sun Valley, ID.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 324 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 13:09:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It is a good beginning for improvements.

Topic Question 2:

Policies that do not adhere to the true definition of wilderness. They can be addressed by adhering faithfully to the Wilderness Act.

Comments: Alternatives that meet the intent of the Wilderness Act should be developed and will include the following: (1) reviewing policies about party size, numbers of stock, and backcountry allocations to ensure those policies meet the intent of the Wilderness Act; (2) allowing natural processes to define the character of the wildernesses; (3) having a strong wilderness character monitoring program; (4) banning the use of motorized equipment and permanent structures for wildlife, cultural resource, or scientific purposes; (5) requiring all public uses of wilderness listed in section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act be conducted in a manner consistent with wilderness preservation; (6) ensuring that in the rare instance where exceptions to generally prohibited uses are necessary for management, that those exceptions be for the singular purpose of preservation of wilderness and that they be the minimum necessary (see Wilderness Act section 4(c));

Correspondence ID: 325 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 14:12:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Question 1

What do you value about the way in which the National Park Service currently manages the Yosemite Wilderness?

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

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I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Question 2

What are the most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness today and how should they be addressed?

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, I work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I am retired and due to my age wear and tear on my joints has taken its toll. My backpacking days are over. The only way I could explore in depth this wonderful site is on horseback. I have spent so much time in the wilderness during my life that having to give up wilderness in old age would impact my soul. Please take disability into account when considering rules regarding horse use in the Park.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to comment.

gratefully,
Juelie

Correspondence ID: 326 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 14:23:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am writing to comment on the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.

Please respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness. That includes stopping the routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness.

These parks must be preserved for wildlife first. Ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 327 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 15:30:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Natural habitat and wildlife. Quiet and undeveloped with no Motorized vehicles. No development from private corporations seeking to profit and despoil our public land. Legacy to future generations of beauty nature. Access to park via traditional transport...hiking and horses and mules, no motors.

Topic Question 2:

Overpopulation and over crowding. Give out monthly passes, state by state. R groupings if a few states. I.e. Washington and Oregon residents can visit during the month of May. New York, New Hampshire, June; Texa, Florida, July...etc. then continually rotate though the months. People can then plan their visits around their scheduled month without hoards of others being there. All states will have a rotation in, which continues indefinitely. Out of county tourists can apply to visit by lottey only.

Absolutely no motorized developments, no public grazing; public use for foot, horseback only.

Comments: Do not succumb to corporate pressure to develop. Do not allow grazing rights (some zealots are currently occupying Oregon public wildlife refuge. This type of lawlessness must not spread to our other public wilderness areas. Protected natural habitat forever.

Correspondence ID: 328 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 16:41:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

i very much value wilderness.i dont want al parks for visitors and commercial interetst. i find too much of that goes on we hafve far too littel wilderness in my opinion. i want more wilderness, i want wilkdermess protected to the highest degree.

Topic Question 2:

profiteers with alot of money getting too close to the govt agency so that they are pals and the rgeneral public gets ripped off in trying to have any land for open space for saving trees and wildlife. the corruption in govt is immense. govt works for rich corporations these days and does absolutelh nothing to protrect and preserve. corruption is rampant.

Comments: i respect the wilderness act and wantit fully protected. i want to stop all use of helicopter in these wilderness sites. i want to stop hunting by gun wacko wildlier murderers in these sites,. i want visitors kept out when the bymbers get too high. i dont want improved trail mgt. i want natural nature keot alive. i dont want commercial profiteers in this area at all.

Correspondence ID: 329 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

As an active equestrian, I value the long-established tradition of the use of equines as a means of accessing Yosemite National Park and the other wilderness areas of our country. It certainly expands access to those might otherwise be physically unable to venture far. I know from a great deal of personal experience that the passage of equines even through pristine wilderness when done with responsible, trained humans can leave much less of a trace than wild game.

Topic Question 2:

Regarding Question 2, I cannot improve upon the comments published by Back Country Horsemen, as follows:

â€ I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No TraceÂ techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

â€ In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No TraceÂ principles.

â€ In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

⌘ In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

⌘ Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

⌘ Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

⌘ The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

⌘ Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

⌘ The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

⌘ Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 330 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 17:13:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value a place where I can ride my horse along scenic trails. It is a beautiful park and should remain open to horses.

Topic Question 2:

What uses will be in the park and keeping them funded for the public to enjoy. I am not educated on where the funding comes from. I am a member of the National Parks Conservation Association and contribute some that way. Also, I pay the entrance fee/pass and any camping fees.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 331 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 17:18:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

I encourage the Park Service to:

⌘ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

⌘ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

⌘ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

⌘ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 332 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 17:51:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Seeking input from various user groups

Topic Question 2:

maintaining access by stock users per historical standards. Allow reasonable access via established trails system

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 333 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 18:36:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

See below

Comments: ~~â€~~ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

~~â€~~ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

~~â€~~ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

~~â€~~ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 334 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I began visiting Yosemite when I was about 4 years old and every year for the next 10 or 12 years. I have witnessed the increasing impact from the multitude of visitors. Of course back in the fifty's there were conflicts among and between guests and the park service was then and are now superb at resolution. I believe the continued working relationship with back country horse groups can help mitigate problems in the park. We are available to help teach recreational and stock users and others such as hikers , bikers etc. how to enjoy the back country and leave no trace. We stand ready to assist in any way we can to help you with your management needs.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue to me is continued access for my stock and myself to the back country. We work with our stock to move the forest services and others in and out of the forest and wilderness all the time. As your budgets decrease and you lose your stock we are there to help you get your supplies to the back country for your research and management needs. My horse and I traveled from Idaho to ride on Oregon beaches, we went to California and explored the Eldorado hills, we went to New Mexico and Arizona. we went to Texas and explored. Then we returned to Idaho to pack the forest service in and out of the woods. We have to insure the continued access to the wilderness. We must work together.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 335 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling on horseback. In addition, I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future. Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

The rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Educating individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet unbiased and non-political scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Unbiased and non-political science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other

Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California/Nevada and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) and BCH-Nevada to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHA for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I look forward to the opportunity to ride in Yosemite National Park in 2016. It has been a dream of mine for several years. The ability to see Yosemite on horseback should be a right preserved for future generations that seem to be losing touch with the outdoors and appreciation of our National Parks. Accessibility for all type of trail users needs to be preserved, and a vocal minority of users should not have the right to demand that other type of recreational users give up their right to experience the National Parks in a way that may be their only option.

Please ensure that public hearings are posted well in advance so ALL interested parties may attend to state their case. Please do not make the Yosemite WSP a "behind-closed-doors" project.

Thank you for your consideration of comments submitted by Back Country Horsemen.

Correspondence ID: 336 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The care given is alright

Topic Question 2:
I would like someday to ride the trails on my horse

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 337 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a retiree and avid rider, who looked forward during my working years to varied riding experiences, especially in the West. I am currently pursuing that goal, and hope I can include Yosemite National Park in those plans. I appreciate that saddle and pack stock have been included in the Park's plan and hope that will continue into the future, not only for me, but for future generations. I am also aware that pack stock provides a valuable service in the management, and I appreciate that the balance of wildness and public enjoyment is being pursued.

Topic Question 2:
Increasing numbers of users and the same number of trail miles requires education so those users know what to expect from the others. Although I am not aware of major conflicts, it can usually be avoided by education to all, and expectations of user sharing of resources. I am sure you are aware that you have a wonderful resource in Back Country Horsemen of California available to you, not only to help with maintenance, but to provide Leave No Trace education. I hope you take advantage of partnering with this group and develop Leave No Trace program through them with the park, to keep the system viable and sustainable into the future.

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Correspondence ID: 338 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 20:29:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Keeping it wild, no roads, no mechanized vehicles. just walking.

Topic Question 2:
Keeping the wild WILD.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 339 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,24,2016 21:53:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
We do a good job.

Topic Question 2:

Keep the High Sierra Camps as they are.

Comments: One hundred years ago, the National Park Service was created, with Stephen Mather being its founder and first director. That very same year he had the first three High Sierra Camps built. Mather knew that if people didn't experience the wilderness, they wouldn't have any reason to protect or preserve it. Only a very small segment of society likes to sleep on the ground, so without the High Sierra Camps, we would only have a small segment of society experiencing the wilderness. These historic camps provide the opportunity for a greater diversity of people to experience, and ultimately protect the wilderness. The camps are one of Yosemite's greatest assets and need to be preserved.

During my 40 years as a Ranger in Yosemite, I have spent a minimum of 3 weeks in the backcountry every summer. The trails are in much better condition now than they were in the 70's, and most wilderness users today seem much more conscientious than 40 years ago. So overall, backcountry conditions are better. That's great.

Correspondence ID: 340 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 02:05:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS makes available and maintains the High Sierra Camps for visitors to enjoy their usage in the back country of the Park, whether on their own or within guided tour settings. By continuing to serve the public in this manner, the NPS allows users to be able to experience the beauty and depth of Yosemite National Park away from the paved roads, motels and hotels, and visitor centers that the majority of Yosemite visitors only see and experience during their visits to the Park. This affords these users a more complete opportunity to enjoy a fuller sense of what Yosemite has to offer, and should definitely be maintained.

Topic Question 2:

Overusage and disrespect of the proper usage of open wilderness areas made available to the public by Yosemite Wilderness

Ensure each visitor understands his/her obligations of using the free and open country made available by Yosemite Wilderness, possibly by reading a written contract and signing such contract.

Comments: Please maintain and preserve the High Sierra Camps.

Correspondence ID: 341 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 04:34:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the maintenance of a wilderness. I value an ability for people to move through that wilderness and experience it with advice and rules to avoid them damaging it through lack of knowledge.

Topic Question 2:

I guess that the sheer numbers of people wanting to visit Yosemite must be a problem. If it is like the Lake District in the UK then most people do not want to move far from their car, so their impact can be channeled and limited by limiting road access and parking thus forcing them to use public transport to move further. Those who are willing to come into Yosemite by public transport and move through the wild areas by foot should be encouraged.

Comments: I am a lifelong and competent hill walker in the UK. I have no experience of walking in the US. So when I visit Yosemite later this year I will travel in by rail and coach and I will hire the services of a guide to both keep me safe and to help me avoid doing any damage through my lack of experience of your conditions. I think it is important that guides are easily available to people like me.

Correspondence ID: 342 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

As a member of Back Country Horsemen of America, an executive committee member of the National BCHA Board, a life long equine trail rider, an individual who has been lucky enough to have ridden on lots of Public Lands (including several National Parks), etc. I consider myself to be an individual who understands the rich history and use of our public lands. I have had plenty of discussions with Public Land managers over the years and I appreciate their tough position of managing our public lands. In specific reference to Yosemite. I rode my private horses in the park in summer 2009 while camping at the south end of the park. We spent most of our time in outlying areas of the park and we did not see a single place that struck me as having been overused by stock. In fact, we did not see any other private stock anywhere on the park. We did see some limited dude string use the actual valley area. I teach classes on trail design, construction and maintenance so I consider myself to be a bit better informed about use impact. Long story short, I believe the management plan that is in place seems to be working well. I would not want to see any further limits on users. More specifically, I believe that equine use in the park is a part of its heritage and restricting such use would be a mistake.

Topic Question 2:

The existing rules for management of the Wilderness Areas are adequate. I do believe that some sort of "latitude" for clearing downed trees of the trails needs to be addressed. Being limited to cross cut saws for large trees is a bit over kill in my opinion in today's world.

Comments: I consider myself to be a serious steward of our Public Lands. I have volunteered all over the country with my trail expertise. I am generally met with some reservation by the management staff wherever I go. They tend to believe that they are the only ones that are stewards of the lands and that they are the only ones capable of addressing issues in the woods. This is a bit silly in my opinion. Here we have all sorts of budget constraints and there is a hesitancy by staff to be receptive of volunteer help. As land managers, you are well aware of the fact that there are a few examples of very productive volunteers groups around the country. In every case, those limited examples are lead by a special land manager that is willing to "PARTNER" with the volunteers. This is becoming more and more of a unique experience which is a shame. The public land managers as a rule need to retool their thinking along the lines of genuine partnerships. Yes, I am speaking not only about Yosemite. I am talking about public lands in general.

Correspondence ID: 343 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 09:30:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It recognizes the amazing natural beauty of the Yosemite Wilderness and seeks to preserve it while allowing people to enjoy it.

Topic Question 2:

Too much love! Overuse threatens to forever harm the Wilderness.

Pressures to allow commercial use of the area, including grazing and providing services to users.

Comments: If access has to be limited, as in putting a cap on number of visitors and/or restricting types and areas of transportation, so be it. Applying for a permit to enter the park, and understanding that access will not be immediate is not a hardship for Americans. It will preserve the Wilderness for their descendants. Limited types and areas of transportation may be inconvenient for couch potatoes, but it is necessary to prevent sensitive ecosystems from being overrun. Not allowing commercial exploitation such as grazing or hotels/restaurants, is also vital.

Correspondence ID: 344 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 09:33:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

That the park is open to equestrian use.

Topic Question 2:

I would like that the park is kept as the best home for wildlife and also minimal impact from tourists.

Comments: We were just in Yosemite staying at the National Park Lodges there for a week. My goal is to bring a group there to ride and possibly stay in the overnight huts provided by the parks. I was saddened to hear that last year the horse/mule program was discontinued. However, we have our own horses and would like to bring them for a visit. We would like to go with a guide that understands the park and preservation of it and can help us navigate thru your beautiful park. I would be further saddened if the park further limits trails for equestrian use. I am a member of the Backcountry Horseman Group here in my state. Thank you for listening to my comments... :)

Correspondence ID: 345 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 09:36:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Dear Sirs/Madame:

I am asking you to:

Respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

Stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

Remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

Ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 346 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I look forward to exploring the wilds of Yosemite on the traditional, historical and primitive mode of travel. HORSEBACK. It is an opportunity of a lifetime that has yet to come my way. I want to explore like Teddy Roosevelt and your first woman Ranger!!

I have been to Yosemite as a child with my father who is now deceased and he always wanted to bring the horses to Yosemite to Explore. I hope to get to LIVE THAT DREAM for my Dad.

Topic Question 2:

I know of none personally. I have heard that there may be some conflict between Hikers and other users but limiting horses and pack-stock users is not the answer. I believe an educated public on the use of leave no trace and the historical traditions of using horses is a much better way to "Keep It WILD". If it weren't for horses and those old traditional trails, the hikers would not have the access they currently enjoy. There is a lot more People trash.(water Bottles, Candy Wrappers, Cigarette butts), than horse organic "trash" left behind which ultimately helps fertilize the land.

Comments: Yosemite IS beautiful.

Correspondence ID: 347 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 09:53:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Topic Question 2:

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

Comments: I personally would love to plan a trip to Yosemite with my horses to explore the trails and camp there. It is on my bucket list, along with many of my other horse friends.

Correspondence ID: 348 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.25,2016 10:02:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

We value the preservation of the park and the management and maintenance that is required. We feel that our visit to Yosemite was a wonderful experience that we hope to repeat in the future. Our family joined a guided trip which truly enhanced our experience and kept us safe on the trail and provided education of the environment that we could not have provided to our family.

Topic Question 2:

We feel that guided and non-guided visitors should have equal access to to Yosemite and the backcountry. We do not feel that it would be in the best interest for guide companies to be limited to the amount of guests or the number of trips that they run. Choosing to work with a guided tour was a choice that we researched and made carefully. We feel that it enhanced our knowledge of Yosemite. What truly concerned me was visitors that were not guided and were on their own with no rangers in site. They were hiking off the trails, jumping into pools of water in unsafe areas, coming too close to the edge of waterfalls, picking up vegetation and picnicking in areas that would otherwise be off limits. Bottom line is that the guided tour is a win win situation for the park. The guided tours helps maintain some decorum in the park, provides education that the park cannot provide and keeps everyone safe.

Comments: We have used a guided tour in other national parks (ie. Grand Canyon) and feel that this is a great way to see and experience the wonderful national parks that we have. It does not burden the park system any further since this is a choice that we made. The company that we have used for both parks were extremely professional.

Correspondence ID: 349 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.25,2016 10:57:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Enjoy the multiple levels of access to the backcountry, from hiking to horses and the ability for those not equipped to stay in back country camps, enjoying all the valley and beyond has to offer. Exposure to the wildness beyond the valley is critical.

Topic Question 2:

Maintaining access to all regions of Yosemite and the High Sierras.

Comments: For many people the back country camps are their first real exposure to what the region offers to people from this country and foreign guests. Nature at its best. The camps are a gateway to new adventures.

Correspondence ID: 350 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.25,2016 11:04:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am an avid trail rider and stock owner. I average over 500 miles a year on local trails and 500 miles on out of state public land trails. I value the trail riding experience of Yosemite National Park, and it would be a great loss if it changed very much. I would not like to see an increase of regulation applied to the wilderness areas. It is important to continue the agency's recently adopted philosophy of "Keeping it Wild"

Topic Question 2:

Education of the user groups about the other user groups they may meet on the trail to reduce the user group conflicts.

Leave no trace is an important educational tool to "Keeping it Wild"

Maintenance of the trails and user group staging areas is of long term concern because of reduced budgets. One of the many solutions is to actively partner with the user groups to help maintain these areas. At present, I don't get the feeling that this is a popular concept.

Comments: If I were a Park Service employee, I would develop personal feelings of ownership of the Wilderness areas. As such, it is hard to invite others into the fold and trust that their intentions are good. It is hard to overcome those feelings, and that is why it is important to develop partnerships with established service organizations.

The equestrian trail rider is growing in numbers, and it is important to preserve areas that can handle their needs.

Thank you for asking, and thank you for your consideration!!

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 351 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

â€I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

â€Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

â€I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

â€I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

â€In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

â€In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

â€In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

â€Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

â€Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

â€The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

â€

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

â€The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

â€Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I have been a recreational trail rider for many years. Both back country and front country. Being from an agricultural background, I am also very aware of possible impacts on the land. I care deeply for our natural world. I believe in the LNT philosophy. I think that the BCH recreational stock users employ more of the LNT philosophy than other user groups. For instance, the use of weed free pelleted feed to minimize weed transmission into sensitive areas, protecting trees from campsite damage, leaving the campsite and trail as clean as possible. This is the famous "pack it in/pack it out" philosophy. We have picked up and packed out much litter left behind by other people.

I am looking forward to having more time for these adventures in the near future because I am retiring this year. Horseback travel in the wilderness is a magical experience. It allows individuals with impaired mobility to enjoy a sense of independence and peace that otherwise would be impossible. There are many people in their later years that will now have the time to enjoy this with their own seasoned equine companion. One really is in tune with the wilderness. Wildlife will stare curiously at a horse and rider rather than flee. It as if they wonder what kind of "moose" this is.

Thank you for allowing me to comment.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 352 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 12:09:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the fact that pack and saddle stock is allowed in the Yosemite wilderness. please maintain our access to national park service wilderness areas.

Topic Question 2:

keep in mind that bch members practice leave on trace when they ride/pack and the bch members also help maintain trails all over the united states. it would also be nice if hikers were educated about talking to horses and taking the down hill side for every ones safety.

Comments: please keep our national park service lands open to pack and saddle riders.

Correspondence ID: 353 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 12:26:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value pristine, QUIET wild landscapes. I love to ride quietly through wilderness. I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain

visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: The National Park Service, The Wilderness Society and the Back Country Horsemen of America are natural allies, and should work closely together to preserve both Yosemite wilderness and leave-no-trace access to it with traditional packstock.

Correspondence ID: 354 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 12:35:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

the NPS needs to be complimented on its use and patrol of wilderness areas. Other agencies have reduced and/or eliminated Ranger patrols in wilderness due to budgetary constraints, but YOSE remains dedicated to the visitors and the condition of the wilderness.

Yosemite also needs to be valued for its access to wilderness. It would be folly to think that wilderness areas are truly not impacted by man. Thus, allowing access keeps wilderness areas in the hands of those who value it. Specifically, I refer to the High Sierra Camps where many individuals who could not otherwise escape their troubled lives can find peace in a comfortable location without putting their health at risk. I have personally witnessed many life-altering behaviors while leading trips through these camps. Further, these experiences led to financial and volunteer rewards for the park. Horseback riding and packers can produce the same results. In both cases, it is to the park's credit that not only are hikers, packers, or backpackers experiencing life in a new way, they are further inspired by park interpreters who enhance the experience. This continues to be a key factor in the appreciation of wilderness by those who camp in and/or near the High Sierra Camps. These camps are truly the one item I most highly value in Yosemite's wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue facing Yosemite's Wilderness today is the same that has faced all of us and specifically in national parks - too many people! Yosemite is a huge draw for people from all over the world. It has precious resources within its wilderness areas that cannot withstand the impact of continuous use. The world population and the California population where the largest percentage of visitation comes from are increasing. There must be a way to reduce the use of the wilderness and restrict use in especially fragile areas. No amount of money can protect the wilderness from masses of backpackers, hikers and packers. These activities need not be removed, but the park needs to have the courage to restrict the numbers and limit use in fragile habitats. The park needs to finance wilderness rangers to maintain patrols and educate the public. The park needs to charge a larger amount for wilderness permits to fund those patrol rangers while reducing the number of permits.

Comments: Yosemite NP is known for its planning processes and yet it does NOT have a positive reputation for implementation. Please ensure that there is equal representation for the individual as for the big companies and the big environmental groups. There is a way to allow access into fragile ecosystems without permanently destroying them. One of the most important aspects of protection and preservation is education. Be sure to include interpretation and education in any and all resolutions.

Correspondence ID: 355 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 12:47:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

As an older person for whom backpacking is a problem but who can still hike, I appreciate that spot trips can be arranged for stock to transport camping gear. I want to encourage the continued availability of such services at Tuolumne Stables as well as for trips into Yosemite by the stables at Virginia Lakes.

Topic Question 2:

Overuse is clearly a potential problem but the various quotas that are now in place should be able to control the impacts. Greater use of destination quotas or closing of some areas for restoration may be needed.

Comments: More public workshops would have been helpful in alerting the public to this process. I suspect that many people are unaware that scoping is now underway.

Correspondence ID: 356 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 12:53:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: We are hopeful the park will always be open to equestrians and horse friendly trails.

Correspondence ID: 357 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 12:56:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I own my horses and am an avid trail rider both in Kansas and many other states. I hope to one day explore Yosemite Wilderness with my own horse and be able to camp and ride as I have in many other Wilderness areas.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and trail riders is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. I would hope the WSP would avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on trail riders, pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 358 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I really value the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy. I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

To reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

Comments: This is very important for all horse people.

Correspondence ID: 359 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 13:34:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the area as it is and do not want to see it ruined with any commercial businesses or degraded with the use of bicycles or other mechanical modes of transport.

Places like Yosemite should be left in it's natural state and people visiting should be able to enjoy the quiet, and the peace that comes with it undisturbed by inventions of civilization. Many people go to places like Yosemite to escape the hectic, competitive, materialistic world of society.

Animals living there do not need to be harassed and disrupted by the presence of man's mechanical devices.

Topic Question 2:

The encroachment of development and commercialization, exploitation of our parks. Along with threats to mine, drill and log in our parks. Also ranchers do NOT belong in our parks-those like the Bundys should be in jail right now!!!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 360 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

The current system in place for accessing Yosemite via a guided experience.

Comments: 1. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

6. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 361 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 14:21:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

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In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: We absolutely must give access and protection to our lands. There is NO way to ever recover those lands once gone.

Correspondence ID: 362 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: 1. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

6. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 363 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I haven't visited Yosemite yet, but my goal is to visit the national parks via horseback. I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback would be an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock- -a primitive mode of travel- -in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness, is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I understand that there is a relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp, and graze pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace (LNT) techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce, or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace principles.

To reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education- -including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trail heads- -to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Educating individuals before their embarking from the trail head appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open-meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trail heads and front country camping areas for persons who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Back Country Horsemen of California (BCHC) and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with BCHC to develop a park-wide equine LNT program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: Regarding accommodations for private horsemen, adequate trailer parking is a must. Suggest working with BCHC members to design these areas, which should include bathroom facilities and adequate space to highline or corral horses overnight, campfire rings or grates, and potable water for campers and stock.

Correspondence ID: 364 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 14:41:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I believe the price of a wilderness camping permit should continue to be free of charge. It is also great that non assigned camping sites are allowed. The bear team is doing awesome in educating the public about properly storing food to prevent bears from getting human food.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue I believe is the degradation to cultural sites. For visitors who have defaced and essentially ruined archeological campsites before, they should not be granted wilderness permits again.

Above Nevada Falls, there are piles of toilet paper. A sign in this area indicating the proximity of the toilet across the bridges should be placed here. More attention to carrying out your toilet paper should occur on visitor signs at the trailhead. Yosemite wilderness is full of toilet paper on trails and by water. Maybe some kind of video can be made to educate visitors and backpackers about the toilet paper they leave behind and how they can help eliminate diseases carried in the water by properly pooping in the woods.

Rock climbers with any skill level are allowed to camp twenty feet off the valley floor with no permits or accountability. Search and rescue helicopters flying almost daily in the summer are not sustainable. The helicopters are loud and an impact to the wilderness character. A climbing route quota system should be enforced on popular routes just as they are on trailheads.

Comments: As more visitors enter the high country earlier and later in the season, the impacts to the wilderness will occur sooner and for a longer duration perhaps having effects that do not repair themselves during the winter. When will restoration crews be employed by not only project specific grant money?

Correspondence ID: 365 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 14:42:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I have something of a love/hate relationship with Yosemite. As an avid rock climber, there are few places in the world that I'd rather spend my time. As a professional climbing guide, I'm regularly frustrated when my clients ask me to guide them in the Park and I have to turn down work that I'd love to have. I understand that there is an excellent guide service that has historically operated within the park, but the majority of people that hire climbing guides build relationships with guides they like and end up climbing with them all over the world. This ensures that paying clients get a better product for their money by eliminating the uncertainty of being randomly paired with an unknown stranger. This is particularly true for trying to tackle longer, more committing objectives.

The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) has rigorous training and examination programs (IFMGA, Rock, and Alpine certifications) that create safe, competent climbing guides who are also excellent stewards of the lands they work in. Other National Parks offer low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations to allow sole proprietors and smaller guide services the same access opportunities as the larger concessionaires. AMGA training is an excellent requirement to incorporate into the vetting process for said CUAs.

Opening up access to a greater diversity of guides and guide services would allow a larger population of the public a better experience when they choose to recreate in this amazing natural environment.

Correspondence ID: 366 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate that the NPS acknowledges climbing activities as an acceptable use of wilderness, and that efforts have been continually made to reconcile climbing and the character of wilderness. I value that the NPS currently allows its concessionaire to accommodate professional guides and make their services available to new climbers, students, and those who are visiting the park for the first time, but I don't believe those services reflect the depth of skill and professionalism that is available in the United States.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue facing the entire park is reconciling the inexhaustible appetite of public with the fragile resources available in the park. For rock climbing this is as true (though not as conspicuous) as any activity.

Comments: Thank you for making this comment option available. I would ask the Park to carefully consider how the presence of a professional guiding community helps to accomplish all of the goals that the park is supposed to prioritize. Professional skilled guides keep their clients safe while operating in the park. They educate their clients about the finite nature of natural spaces and the preserving the character of American wilderness. They set a tone that is respectful and dignified. These attributes and behaviors are somewhat obvious, but it might not be obvious that everyone else in the park also benefits from the interactions that professional guides have with their clients. Their rigorous best practices are emulated by adjacent parties. Their knowledge of rescue, first aid, and intervention can be of immediate aid to all other climbers, visitors, and professional rescuers. The care and educational value that they offer to everyone around them helps preserve the fragile environment for posterity's sake.

In the United States, the AMGA has been training and credentialing guides at the highest international standards for over 30 years. So, I would also ask the park to consider that making additional Commercial Use Authorizations available to these guides would allow the highest caliber of professional to access and facilitate the highest caliber of American rock climbing. The best and most iconic venue in the world should be facilitated by the most professional and iconic of American guides.

Correspondence ID: 367 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Fairly strict regulations and permitting to regulate use

Topic Question 2:

opening Yosemite wilderness up to attainable guiding opportunities for trained, certified Mountain guides. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA. As rock climbing and mountaineering and skiing are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Modern, trained guides, especially from the American Mountain Guide Association (AMGA) are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 368 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 15:00:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think they are doing a fine job except for the discussion of removal of the High Sierra Camps. It should not happen! Please save the High Camps.

Topic Question 2:

Removal of the High Camps. It should not happen! These should be national landmarks not discard them. Please reassess this issue. Please save the High Camps.

Comments: Removal of the High Camps. It should not happen!

I hiked my first loop at 7yrs old and have gone to the back country just about every year since that time. My first trip was in 1968. Every year my parents and I made the trek. We got to know the crew, other guests, and the amazing Nic Fiore. When you experience the high camps, It is like a moment in time that cannot be replaced. There are feelings of accomplishments, adventure and lasting friendships made. Each camp has a beauty and a story of its own.

I enjoyed the high camps so much that I started working at Merced Lake when I was 18yrs old. Hired by Nic Fiore. I worked there for four summers. I made wonderful lasting friendships, I had amazing adventures and have very exciting stories to tell my children and grandchildren.

In today's technical society, it is nice to know there is still a place to go where a quiet, simple life (even if for a short time) still exists. A place where families can bond like mine did. No matter the age, the Yosemite High Camps are a magnificent place to visit. To be a part of nature. To experience the deer feeding at dusk in the meadows below Sunrise High Sierra Camp; to a day of swimming in the beautiful Merced Lake, then to enjoy singing and bear stories around the campfire in the evening; and let us not forget Vogelsang with its high peaks and breathtaking views.

To cut any of this out would be downright unjust! My daughter is expecting and due in April. My first grandbaby! I am so very excited! (It's a girl by the way) I want to be able to share this with her. It is where my stories can come to life.

I am just one person, but I am sure there are thousands of people who feel the same way. People who have wonderful memories, who have made everlasting friendships and who want to share this with their grandchildren.

As John Muir so eloquently puts it...

"The mountains are calling and I must go."

â€ John Muir

"In every walk with Nature one receives far more than he seeks."

â€ John Muir

Walking from camp to camp and spending time in the wilderness that happened to me.

Please save the High Sierra Camps. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

"Going to the mountains is going home."

â€ John Muir

Correspondence ID: 369 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 15:06:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I own and operate a small guide service in Moab, Ut. I am a member of the AMGA as well. I strongly believe that the Park should allow additional CUA's for rock climbing. I am constantly ask to guide climbing and canyoneering in Arches and Canyonlands which have seen fit to not allow any commercial guiding of these activities. The reasoning put forth was that these activities where taking place so there was no need for commercial guides. This logic is as flawed as saying that, because some people have gardens, we don't need produce stores. Commercial guides are an invaluable resource in educating the public and preserving the resource.

Our Public lands are seeing a growth in use that needs to be managed. Rather than shut out a valuable partner the NPS should seek the assistance of commercial operators that can educate the public, teach LNT and help to enhance a visit to the park

The AMGA is far more articulate than I. Here is the list of reasons why, that the organization and I both feel, that highly trained professionals that hold a

vested interest in the resource are the very best people to have introduce visitors to the Park.

1. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.
2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness.
3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.
4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.
5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.
6. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

The outdoor recreation economy is booming. People are banging on the door. This is an opportunity for the NPS to change outdated policy and embrace the change in a meaningful and responsible way. More rock climbers guided by companies that follow LNT principles are hardly the users that should be shut out.

Thank you,
Carl

Correspondence ID: 370 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

AMERICA WAS BUILT ON THE BACK OF A HORSE. I HAVE HAD MULES AND HORSES FOR OVER 55 YEARS AND NOW IN AM 69 YRS OLD AND STILL IN THE SADDLE. IT IS A FEW SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS THAT WHAT THE TRAILS CUT OUR FOR SADDLE AND PACK ANIMALS. THAT COUNTRY HAS BEEN RIDDEN SINCE 1849 , WHY NOW. IT'S NOT BROKE LEAVE LIVE STOCK IN THE MOUNTAINS. BEAUTY ALL AROUND AND IT SHOULD BE RESPECTED.
SINCERELY

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 371 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I feel that minimizing human impacts of the wilderness is of huge value for me. Minimal human structures and keeping visitor impacts to a minimal.

Topic Question 2:

Over crowding and lack of public education about minimal impact use of the wilderness.

Comments: I feel strongly that the situation of commercial rock climbing guiding in YNP is not ideal or optimal. As a full time mountain guide that engages visitors into the surrounding wilderness around yosemite - I think it poses a problem that there is only one guiding permit that is issued to a sole concessionaire. Local area guide services are therefore not allowed to take their clients into yosemite wilderness areas for technical rock climbing. This creates a monopoly of rock climbing guiding within the park. I would value a limited Comercial Use Authorization platform for area guide services to bring clients into the park. This would not only allow greater access for clients but also bolster the economies of gateway communities to the park and alleviate some strains on lodging and congestion in the park. AMGA certified guides can reduce overall impacts by educating the climbers that they take into the wilderness on minimal use impacts of the climbing resources in the wilderness areas of the park. Guides can also reduce impacts by taking clients to less crowded and more remote aspects of the park reducing overall congestion of high traffic areas. In our areas in Inyo NF and Humbolt Toyabe NF that surround the park - Guides are ambassadors for the resources and provide valuable support for rescue services and education to the public. Thank you for considering this request to open up "credential based access" to YNP for Commercial guides.

Correspondence ID: 372 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the respect the NPS shows to their role as stewards of the Yosemite Wilderness. I believe they try to be fair in setting policies that allow the public to enjoy the vast wilderness areas of Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

I believe the most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness is the protection of the areas we all love to visit. Many areas are visited by people who wish to explore Yosemite wilderness without following ethics necessary to minimize their impacts. I believe the NPS needs to better deliver educational messages to the public who often ignore guidelines listed on their wilderness permits. I do not believe new trail quotas for hikers would have as much effect on these impacts as proper education for those who wish to visit would. Another issue is stock use. Many trails have become denuded by stock use and are polluted with animal droppings during the peak season months. If hikers have to follow principles of zero waste, why don't stock managers?

Comments: I would like to share my public comments on the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan to address concerns about the future management of Yosemite Wilderness. While I respect the way the National Park Service currently manages the wilderness, there are always going to be aspects of the plan that I agree with more than others. I believe my organization plays a role in helping the park manage the wilderness and appreciate the ability to provide

input. I look forward to future planning and would like my comments to focus on one statement in particular: "Finally, there is a need to determine the extent to which commercial services will be performed in the Yosemite Wilderness."

I have spent a significant amount of time in the Yosemite Wilderness over the past decade, and my love for it has grown each year. I am the owner of a commercial organization that leads hiking and backpacking trips into Yosemite Wilderness and spend a lot of my free time there as well. My time in the wilderness has made me more aware of the world around me and has provided me an excellent setting to achieve significant personal growth in that time. I feel I have grown as a business and community leader as well as a human being. I think the biggest growth I've achieved is as a conservationist and preservationist of our wild lands. I am active in several volunteer groups and donate many of our company's proceeds to several nonprofit organizations to help protect these lands, particularly in Yosemite.

I am adding this to my public comment because I believe that further limiting the already restrictive commercial use of the Yosemite Wilderness to hiking and backpacking groups would have negative consequences. I also believe hiking and backpacking have very low impacts on wilderness when proper ethics are practiced. In 1892 John Muir founded the Sierra Club with an idea to bring members of the public on trips into the Yosemite Wilderness to develop an appreciation for the land and create a community of future protectors. Muir's plan worked well and the Sierra Club is a thriving organization. The Yosemite Conservancy also follows that premise while leading donors and customers into Yosemite Wilderness each year. I proudly contribute to the Yosemite Conservancy and regularly inform our guests of their efforts to help provide funding for the management of the national park. In addition, I have built my company, YExplore, on the Sierra Club model and have led a significant amount of visitors on Yosemite trips who have later become donors of Yosemite Conservancy and other organizations.

As leaders in Yosemite, commercial guiding groups are responsible for helping the park alleviate congestion away from many of the main frontcountry areas while providing exceptional visitor experiences for the public who wish to make special connections with nature. It is a role I take seriously, and I am proud of this responsibility as a steward. I relish the opportunity of laying the foundation of ethics for many first time visitors to wilderness while exploring diverse trails throughout the Yosemite Wilderness at different times each year. As an outdoor educator, I am able to spend each day with new audiences sharing my passion for protection of wilderness while spreading the message of the National Park Service in partnership with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. Many in my groups adopt this passion as we continue this perpetual cycle of developing new stewards for wild lands.

In sum, commercial organizations perform many duties the National Park Service depends upon to help manage Yosemite National Park. We provide information and education to the public who use our services while promoting the park's messages of conservation and protection of wilderness. Our sharing of this knowledge is not limited to the groups we lead as we also share vital information with many trail travelers we encounter. This is also helpful since the NPS does not employ as many wilderness rangers as they wish, and we often help provide assistance. I believe the biggest benefit of continuing to allow commercial hiking groups the opportunity to operate in wilderness is our ability to persuade visitors to stay away for the most crowded areas of the park, mainly in summer months, but in all times of year. We spend a good amount of time during our pre-tour selection process explaining the benefits of a wilderness hike as an alternative to sharing a steamy overcrowded Yosemite Valley trail in summer with thousands of others who did not receive that education. Finally, I believe these types of outings continue to build a substantial base of supporters for protection of Yosemite Wilderness and produce many future stewards who will care for our national parks for decades to come. Thank you, I look forward to future discussions.

Correspondence ID: 373 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 17:21:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Measures, such as backcountry permit system, to restrict excessive human impact in the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I'm a rock climber and every time I visit Yosemite, I can see more and more people are drawn to "climb a rock" in Yosemite. However, there seems to be not enough diverse opportunity for visitors to choose a guide. As rock climbing an inherently dangerous activity, and rock climbing in Yosemite requires advanced skills and many of the routes demand complicated knowledge in climbing systems, people really need some guidance from whom they are most comfortable with. This person might be some qualified guide from the visitor's local guiding business. However the current system prohibits independent guides to acquire a permit. In the past, there was no reliable certification process to verify a self-claimed guide's credentials so it's natural for the Park Services to impose the system we see now.

But things have changed, since 1979 AMGA has provided good instructional courses and fair certification process for prospective modern guides to acquire necessary skills including client care and technical skills and these trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource. If the park service could consider make available additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities, I think it'll be a win-win-win situation for the park, guides, and visitors.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 374 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 17:49:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Visiting Yosemite is on my bucket list of places to ride. My hope is that it remains open for trail riders like myself who wish to enjoy this treasured park. My husband and I have traveled to many states where horses are welcomed and in fact, invited to ride and camp. We do so in the most respectful way, preserving the beauty and natural habitat. Horses are a natural way to view the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Like all parks, sharing the parks with others will continue to be a challenge. Mountain bikes, hikers and trail riders all have the same goal, to see the park in a way that is meaningful. Education on how best to care for the land and interact and respect each others interest is critical.

Comments: Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 375 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 18:13:44

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that I am able to access a climbing guide service to facilitate my ability to access the Yosemite Wilderness. However the number and diversity of guide services which have CUAs limits my ability to enjoy a small group experience in the Yosemite Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

The impacts created by large guide service operations, in spite of best intentions by themselves and the USNPS.

Comments: As a person desiring to use personalize and professional climbing/skiing guide, there are currently limited opportunities for those guides to obtain CUAs for Yosemite.

A high level of wilderness ethics and professional training by those guides makes an important positive impact of the future of our wilderness areas. A high level of professional training should be a requirement for obtaining CUAs. Examples of appropriate credentials are guides with IFMGA Mountain Guide, AMGA Rock, Alpine and/or Ski Guide certifications.

There should be increased availability of CUAs for sole owner/small business guides to meet the needs of clients, such as myself.

Correspondence ID: 376 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

1- identifies the value that a wilderness environment can provide, and seeks to preserve that value.
2- provides for public access and education, in order to form an alliance of stewardship of our shared inheritance.

Topic Question 2:

The challenge is to continue to provide access to the public without threatening the wilderness environment. The best way to achieve this is through education. Rock climbing is high profile, but not high impact. This is a wilderness user experience that needs to be encouraged, particularly through guide services that educate their clients in stewardship.

Comments: The best way to open up guided climbing opportunities for the public is to make Commercial Use Authorizations available to quality guide services. This can not be limited to a single concession, as it was in the past. Because that model is no longer consistent with the state of the guiding industry. Small businesses and sole proprietors are providing the highest standard of mountain guiding and climbing instruction, and the best way forward is to ensure that these highly qualified guides and services can obtain permits.

Correspondence ID: 377 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 19:06:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would like to officially request the committee take a deeper look in to having more viable options for guided climbing and mountaineering in the park. There is a large discrepancy in today's system between the options available from the park service and the state at which this industry operates.

There are numerous professional guides and small business owners that have cultivated clientele for years from around the country and the world. These relationships have revolved around the beauty and appreciation of the outdoors from a climbing perspective. As it currently stands there are no viable options that allow these professionals to venture into the park with their clients in a responsible manner.

Correspondence ID: 378 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value how the Valley has busy and non busy places. I value being able to escape the crowds via rock climbing wall or traveling in the High Sierra regions near Tioga Pass.

Topic Question 2:

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

Comments: 1. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

6. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 379 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 19:55:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Providing access to one of the most beautiful landscapes in the world.

Topic Question 2:

Access is paramount the more visitors we can have out in the field enjoying the park the better. Allowing more guided access would allow visitors to enjoy climbing in one of the most spectacular venues in the world. Furthering leave no trace ethics, and safe climbing practices.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 380 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Recognizing the historical nature of rock climbing in Yosemite and allowing for current and future generations of climbers to experience this unique resource.

Topic Question 2:

The management of commercial recreation, specifically guided rock climbing, should be updated to 1) reflect the desires of the guided public and 2) the value of increased training standards for professional mountain guides in the United States.

I believe that the current management system does not provide for diverse experiences for the public for whom climbing with a guide is the desired way of experiencing wilderness.

A well trained professional mountain guide is capable of helping achieve agency objectives towards educating the public about the value and nature of wilderness. These objectives generally include minimum impact climbing and wilderness travel techniques, natural and cultural history, and agency mission. These externally-trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and of the wilderness resource. Protecting the resource is critical to these guides.

Furthermore, research shows that rock climbing and mountaineering are not at carrying capacity in Yosemite wilderness. The updated wilderness management plan should allow for additional commercial use and provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

It seems to me that the addition of guiding opportunities, in the form of a low-ratio CUA, may be an excellent strategy. By allowing additional limited CUAs for rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities, this would make the permitting process feasible for small businesses and sole proprietors. These same providers are capable of delivering wilderness experiences for climbers who have divergent skill sets and interests, while allowing for customized, low-impact programs in wilderness.

Finally, it is imperative that Yosemite consider the credentials of guides who are providing commercial services in wilderness. I believe that CUAs should only be granted to those guides who have attained the highest professional training that is available in the United States-either AMGA Certified Rock Guide, Certified Alpine Guide, or IFMGA Guide- -all of which meet the international training standards set by the IFMGA for professional mountain guides. These terrain-specific credentials should be considered essential since they provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and can serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts related to wilderness climbing.

Thank you,
Kurt Hicks

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 381 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 20:02:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value preservation of the natural environment

Topic Question 2:

How wilderness can be protected and preserved without prohibiting the public from enjoying our public lands. This can be achieved through education more than restrictions.

Comments: As a professional IFMGA guide I believe there is no one more able to take people into the wilderness and educate them on best practice than me and my professional colleagues. Certified guides offer diversity and personalization to the wilderness experience, providing an opportunity to educate guests to appreciate and take pride in the preservation of our public lands.

Correspondence ID: 382 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 21:01:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Trying to keep it wild! This is a huge task when trying to involve millions of visitors per year.

Topic Question 2:

Keeping wildlife safe and around. I see many ignorant tourists trying to feed the animals that are already anthropogenically altered.

Comments: Please keep private guiding OUT of the park. Guides will just increase the traffic in the park. Guides often assume that because they re getting paid, they have more of a right to the Yosemite hiking and climbing than the rest of the public. We don't need anymore of this type of business in the park. Please keep it as wild as possible so that future generations can enjoy the wild nature of the park that generations ago enjoyed.

Correspondence ID: 383 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 21:08:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I believe the wilderness visitor Quota system is necessary. I also believe that each person granted a permit should have to sit through a 10min presentation covering how to travel in the wilderness in a safe way that promotes improving the environment. This is done in some other countries in South America.

Topic Question 2:

Too many people on trails in the backcountry that can't take care of themselves and don't take care of the wilderness as well.

Comments: Use of the wilderness by certified mule packers has been a long standing tradition and part of the regional heritage. I would not want such services to be curtailed. The Packers and Pack Companies are stewards of the backcountry. The Packers are not the issue. Some of the people packed in or some backpackers behaviors are sometimes an issue.

Correspondence ID: 384 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

opportunities for solitude once one gets off the main highway trails.

That climbing in Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne is not subject to regulation

Topic Question 2:

Threats to habitat and wilderness values.

Climate change is the biggest and out of control of the NPS. All that can be done is to apply bandaids and protect critical habitat for species other than humans where possible. Fire will be the biggest threat tot he backcountry as we see t now and can only increase.

The overall level of knowledge and experience of backcountry visitors has declined and this lack of knowledge does damage through obliviousness.

Comments: As a mountain guide based in Bishop I am very limited in the visitors I can guide in the Park. There is a need for qualified individuals to meet the need for educational guided backcountry experiences. We routinely get asked to guide in Tuolumne and cannot despite YMS doing very little there. we get asked for guided ascents of backcountry peaks in YNP where YMS never goes but we are unable to guide mountaineering. In the 1980s ans 1990s we has mountaineering included on our IBP and first CUAs but that was removed.

There is a need that is not being met.

Guides can be the extension of the NPS and aid greatly in interpretation of the human and natural history. I would rather see a situation where we are treated as partners, not as despoilers and extractors of the wilderness. The NPS doe snot have staff on many trails in the summer and certainly not out in the winter.

I have no problem with qualifications, training and experience being asked of me. I have no problem picking up trash, putting out fires and assisting other visitors.

Hold me to a high standard but also give me the opportunity to practice the profession I have undertaken for nearly 35 years and to introduce visitors to the wonders of the High Sierra n safe, educational and enjoyable manner.

Correspondence ID: 385 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the fact that Yosemite NP is accessible to visitors of all ages and abilities. The developed facilities in the valley provide probably the only way that many of the senior and very junior population can access the area. The availability of back country trails and camps supports the more physically able and rugged backpacker and climber looking for their respective unique experiences only available at Yosemite. Additionally, the availability of 'spot trip' services with commercial stock concessionaires supports the needs of those of us who desire a minimal-impact back country experience, but who are no longer physically able to deal with the weight of a heavy backpack.

Topic Question 2:

Traffic in the Valley during the summer. Suggest consideration of a 'high season' shuttle system similar to that used by Zion NP.

Comments: My local Sierra Club section arranges one or more not-for-profit "dunnage drop/spot trip" outings to the Yosemite back country each summer through Tuolumne Meadows Pack Station and Virginia Lakes Pack Station. Almost all of us are former backpackers who are experienced in the ways of minimal-impact camping, but who are no longer physically able to deal with the weight of a heavy backpack. The services provided by these concessionaires are essential to our ability to access the back country, and I strongly recommend that the current system for managing these establishments and their operations be preserved, so that they can continue to provide these services at a reasonable price and a fair return on their investment. Without their services, we will be relegated to Valley tourists, and will no longer have access to our beloved back country.

Correspondence ID: 386 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 21:28:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am glad that this land is preserved for future generations to enjoy and use.

Topic Question 2:

No access for mountain guides to work in the Valley.

Comments: I would like to see technical climbing access open to the guided public. The certification process through the American Mountain Guide Assoc. is the gold standard for training in the US. Guides that have completed this training would love to be able to take their clients to climb in the birthplace of big wall climbing. Yosemite is the Mecca of climbing in the world. Let certified guides have access to run small, low impact, services to their personal clients. This will serve the guided public in a way they have not been able to thus far.

Correspondence ID: 387 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 22:07:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the NPS strives to provide access to a maximum number of Americans and international visitors to allow them to experience the unique wilderness that is Yosemite while at the same time striving to preserve and perpetuate the fragile eco-system that is the key to the enjoyment of this national park and wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness today is maintaining the balance between the opening up of access to the wilderness and the preservation of the natural eco-system that makes up the wilderness. The closing of the park to vehicles, the provision of systems that allow visitors to enjoy the park in a way that does not degrade it are key to maintaining this balance.

Comments: The broadening of mountaineering, rock-climbing, back-country skiing, camping, and hiking experiences without degrading the parks eco-system can be best accomplished by requiring visitors to work with professional guides to direct their experiences. Not only will the visitors' experiences be enhanced by the background, skills training, and environmental education provided by the guides, their appreciation of their experience will be greater and their understanding of the role of stewards of the wilderness will add to their enjoyment. Without the requirement of professional guides, many visitors will attempt inappropriate goals and in so doing will put themselves and the local environment at risk. By working with guides, the visitors' experiences will be enhanced, yet restricted to an appropriate level for their experience and abilities.

Correspondence ID: 388 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 22:33:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

There appears to be an appreciation for the importance of maintaining "wilderness", as reflected in the video "Episode 3: Wilderness". I agree with the description in this video, regarding all the reasons why wilderness is important and why it will no longer be wilderness if it is made "safe" and "easily accessible".

Topic Question 2:

50 million people live within a day's drive of the Yosemite Wilderness- if only a small percentage of that population wants to visit, it will be very challenging to maintain a "wilderness state". Yosemite's wilderness is in danger of being loved to death. How to address this? Relentless public education, combined with strict controls that are enforced.

Comments: Wilderness will cease to be Wilderness if it is manipulated or modified in any way. The challenge is to find a way of letting people enjoy and immerse themselves in wilderness, without changing it. I believe people CAN interact with wilderness without damaging it, but there must be strict standards and controls and shared values that are vigorously enforced.

I personally experienced this in a 2 week float trip down the Grand Canyon. Because of the strict controls and standards, I felt that I was the very first person to set foot on each night's camping spot. The concessioners as well as independent boaters all knew the rules, bought into the values, and appreciated the importance of preserving the wilderness. I never saw a single piece of trash or toilet paper or damage to natural features in 14 days on the river. THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED IN YOSEMITE WILDERNESS- -even with use by backpackers and horses and mules- -if there are shared values leading to standards that are strictly enforced.

Conversely, I DO NOT believe that more invasive methods of wilderness access, such as helicopters or motorized vehicles, can meet the necessary criteria, because their very nature - - noise producing, exhaust producing - - violate some of the principles described in the NPS' video, such as QUIET.

Correspondence ID: 389 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 22:41:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Preservation of a beautiful and fragile natural environment that can be enjoyed by many people in some places, by few in spots further from the trails. I am a climber and I appreciate access to back country climbing opportunities, provided climbers follow leave no trace practices whenever possible.

Comments: I had a wonderful guide experience with Doug Robinson near the Palisade area. I have good friends who are AMGA certified guides, including Kurt Hicks. Kurt and those who have AMGA certification are wonderful environmental stewards and ambassadors for climbers who want to experience climbing but do not have skills or partners to go there on their own. I hope you will allow a small number of AMGA guides to take climbers into the backcountry in Yosemite. They would probably be better stewards of the environment and help set the right tone for the climbing community than if you ban guiding activity there altogether. I heard about this comment opportunity from Kurt.

Thank you for your work in preserving Yosemite Park AND for making it accessible to climbers who are responsible stewards of this amazing resource.

Correspondence ID: 390 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,25,2016 22:53:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The Yosemite Wilderness is a wonderful and precious resource. I appreciate that the NPS works diligently to protect the resource while supporting access for people to enjoy the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Preserving the wilderness while opening its door for people to cherish and become stewards of nature is of utmost importance for the future of our planet's people and health. I strongly encourage the NPS's support of allowing visitors to witness and partake in the wilderness under the teachings of professional mountain guides. Educating visitors about leave no trace ethics and activity skills is crucial to this goal and certified, professional guides engaging in a mentorship role with visitors while in the wilderness is an excellent way to promote safety and reduce environmental impacts. It would benefit many people and the land to allow additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities with modern, trained guides such as AMGA Rock Guides or AMGA Alpine Guides whom hold certifications that provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill. Limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain would help connect these invested stewards of the land to future stewards of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 391 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.25,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the National Park Service has managed the park so well that they can allow people to enjoy pristine back country on horseback and on foot. I have spent over 500 nights in the back country and look forward to taking my children and grandchildren into the Yosemite back country on foot and horseback. I believe permitting a certain number of individuals per year and per trek has had a great impact. I believe the bear issues have and will continue to be dealt with in a sense that the park service individuals are keeping bears in their natural habitat, living with the simple bear necessities, and not being impacted by humans. I believe that the park service has done a great job informing and enforcing, leave no trace in the back country. I value that the park is open to both adventurists on foot as well as horseback, since the day it was declared a national park.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue in my understanding is in preserving the park as well as nature intends it to be preserved. I believe forest fires are needed. I believe that the back country will evolve and adapt the way it is intended to with best practices of leave to trace. I don't know what to think of the Valley Floor, where 90% of tourists come to enjoy the parks magnificence. I think it is good from a revenue aspect. Leave no trace is no where near obtainable there. I think if the park can accommodate the masses on 10% of the parks land and make good money, they should. They can use some of that money to preserve the remaining 90% (the backcountry) for the individuals, on foot and horseback, who are conscious of the magnitude of importance in preserving the back country for the future generations.

Comments: I think the Park Service is doing a great job and I look to give back each time I visit by leaving the park better than I found it. If it be picking up a piece of trash or informing others of the proper ways to conduct ones self in the park. I am grateful for your dedication and determination to preserve the park for all people to enjoy. The nights I spend in the backcountry, listening to crickets and the horses moving ever so slightly, gazing off into the stars, being completely in the moment, I will be thankful.

Thank you.

Your's truly in seeking to preserve the backcountry for all who wish to enjoy responsibly.

Trevor John Poindexter

Correspondence ID: 392 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.25,2016 23:27:48
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that concessionaires are allowed to operate guided backpacking trips into the wilderness. We have the equipment and confidence to do a one or two night backpacking trip, but prefer doing multi-day trips with well run, reputable guiding companies that have trained and experienced guides.

Topic Question 2:

I don't know if this is the important issue, but I'm concerned about the many people we see who enter national park backcountry who are completely unprepared. It's almost like a ranger needs to be posted at each trailhead to determine whether those beginning a hike have proper equipment, fluids, footwear, etc. We've even had to give water to hikers who've looked like they will not make it back to the trailhead. This has occurred in parks and wilderness areas ranging from Grand Teton, Yosemite and Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

Comments: In scoping the plan and conducting the studies for it, please maintain an open mind about guiding companies (i.e., guided backpacking trips). Such companies provide a valuable service by providing trained and experienced guides to take small groups into parts of the wilderness that the guests might not otherwise have an opportunity to visit. They take care of everything (obtaining permits, providing equipment, cooking, etc.), which is especially valuable to guests who have busy careers. They also teach the guests proper wilderness ethics ("leave no trace"). I've never seen a guided trip leave trash behind at a campsite or along the trail, but I've see this problem caused by private (unguided) groups.

Correspondence ID: 393 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.26,2016 04:28:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It is beautifully managed and in wonderful condition.

We had a guided visit and enjoyed camping in the national park. We enjoyed the range of terrains we were able to see and we were in a small group with only four of us and a guide. wonderful experience.

Topic Question 2:

Fire risk.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 394 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 07:06:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I like that NPS is asking for the public's feedback and that NPS recognizes that people utilize the park differently - climbing.

Topic Question 2:

Access. I think there are more opportunities for commercialization of rock climbing. (Rock) Guides should be limited to those who have sufficient training and certifications (AMGA). Guides have a vested interest in conservation and are good stewards of the land.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 395 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 07:23:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

As a lifelong California resident, I have been to Yosemite a few times. One of my activities is rock climbing. Because I am limited to using the Yosemite Mountaineering School in Yosemite, I rarely climb there.

Over the years, I have developed a personal and working relationship with a rock climbing guide from another company (North Cascades Mountain Guides). I trust their judgment and have a rapport with them. I exclusively use this service, for those reasons.

I would like to see Yosemite allow guiding services, other than YMS, able to provide guiding services in YNP. So I can better enjoy the beauty the Park offers and participate in my favorite activity, rock climbing. Thank you.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 396 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I do NOT value caving to pressure from individuals and groups who want to diminish the quality of natural areas.

Topic Question 2:

maintain the integrity of quiet, out of bounds, natural areas for wildlife.

Comments: ~~â€~~ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

~~â€~~ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

~~â€~~ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

~~â€~~ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 397 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 08:25:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Like it the way it is!

Topic Question 2:

I love the Hi Sierra Camps and never want them to go away!

Comments: As I age I need the mules and horses to stay! I never want to not be able to get into the wilderness. thank you.

Correspondence ID: 398 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the care that is put into maintaining the pristine environment despite the overwhelming influx of tourism.

Topic Question 2:

One of the issues I see is the lack of diversity in guide services that are equipped to take clients out into perhaps the most stunning wilderness area for rock

climbing. By allowing additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities, the terrain becomes more accessible to the general population. This can be done in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 399 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Yosemite is the "holy land" for us climbers. I am a member of the AMGA and teach climbing largely an indoor capacity here in Philadelphia. However, it is every climbers' dream to someday visit and climb in Yosemite. The National Park Service must manage this interest and attention from around the country in sustainable ways while also providing support and encouragement for a growing population of young people who rarely get outdoors. Organizations like the AMGA provide the professional terrain specific guidelines that are greatly needed. I would ask that you consider to increase your support of AMGA trained guides who can provide the safety, stewardship, and education needed to meet the demands of use in Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:
I would argue for an increase of access for AMGA guides to provide diverse opportunities for visitors to the park. If Yosemite can set the standard for national park use (and in particular protection of climbing), then now is the moment to support guides who sacrifice a great deal in order to meet the goals of the National Park Service. It is the common vision of AMGA and the National Park Service to provide education, stewardship, and protection of our national treasures.

Comments: Please let me know if you have other questions about how I build this ethic in my school teaching and programming at

Correspondence ID: 400 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I like to see Yosemite managed to maintain natural values as much as possible given the huge amount of visitors.

Topic Question 2:
I think we should start to consider limiting the amount of visitors.

Comments: I am part of the Sierra Club Mule Pack Section. Our trips use mules that go in and out on the same day. I am concerned about the environmental impact of stock that stays in the wilderness for multiple days at a time.

Correspondence ID: 401 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 09:39:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Having only been there when I was a child I do not currently have much to comment on this question. However as an adult I have become an avid user of our park system on everything from hiking, climbing, skiing and more. Accessibility to all would be the biggest value. Keep our parks open as often as possible and allow ways for folks who maybe wouldn't otherwise experience the park that ability to do so.

Topic Question 2:
Again without having been to Yosemite since I was a child but with multiple "wish list" trips I would like to do in that area I think managing the number of folks accessing the area. Doing your best with education to help reduce the impact of people visiting the park without reducing the people coming. If people don't come people won't care to preserve or fund our parks but perhaps allowing more guiding options throughout the park to help disperse some of the higher traffic areas. There are lots of people who hire guides for hiking, backpacking and climbing. If you were to open those boundaries perhaps you could reach more people and spread the impact throughout the park.

Comments: I am not a guide but I utilize guide services on a semi regular basis for skiing, climbing, backpacking either for instruction or knowledge to a certain area. I am continually impressed with guides that are AMGA/IFMGA certified or working towards certification. They are knowledgeable, safe, efficient, they do their part to reduce impact on the environment through LNT tactics and generally love their surroundings and want to share it with people and help to preserve it. I will never be a dedicated big wall climber but having the opportunity to hire someone so I could experience it would be amazing!

In the end managing the impact of visitors without reducing the visitor numbers and expanding areas of the park to guiding so us less experienced folk or for people who may have never been climbing, hiking, camping etc. can have the opportunity to experience parts of the park that they would not normally

Thanks for what you folks are doing!

Correspondence ID: 402 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 09:43:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the way the NPS has managed the ever growing number of visitors. Although the amount of traffic continues to grow offering environmentally friendly shuttle buses has great reduced the number of automobiles in the park.

Also, the NPS managed to keep the park aesthetics in check - again considering the increase of visitors.

Topic Question 2:
TRAFFIC. Mainly in peak season times.

The traffic impacts the aesthetics and overall experience of being in a park. One possible solution could be to have all day use visitors park up in Buck Meadows / Mariposa / Oakhurst and take a shuttle into the valley - just during summer peak times.

Comments: One other area I would like to see is an increase or more choices for outdoor guide services. With the increase in visitors to the park each year, visitors should have some choice in outdoor hiking, biking, rock climbing, back country skiing, etc. services. These operators should be held to the same professional requirements that are currently in place. They should also be trained to teach visitors not only the activities (climbing, skiing, hiking, etc.) but how to enjoy the outdoor experience while limiting impact to the park. This would add value to the visitors experience - a really important take away education.

Correspondence ID: 403 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 09:49:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the ways in which the NPS knows to leave the wilderness alone, letting it simply be itself. It's a wild place, and does not need to be made safer or more comfortable or more civilized. By leaving these places alone, the NPS fulfills its mission and provides a great service to the entire country.

Topic Question 2:

I value the High Sierra Camps very much and would like them to continue. I feel what impact they have on the wilderness is mitigated by the tremendous good they do by simply being there, drawing many visitors deeper into the park than they would normally go.

Comments: Please keep the High Sierra Camps of Yosemite! They are an amazing way to bring visitors into contact with real wilderness, and serve to educate many about what wilderness is.

Correspondence ID: 404 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 10:42:54

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

There is a small imprint on the wilderness in way of trails, but much of the wilderness is still accessible by foot or animal. I also like the diversity of experiencing the wilderness: High Sierra Camps, mule pack trips, day hikes, backpacking, camping.

Topic Question 2:

How to handle large crowds and still maintain the wilderness experience. This is the ongoing tension because people need to have access to the wilderness to value and support it. But there needs to be good management and control of this. I think the NPS does a good job preserving the wilderness.

Comments: I am most bothered by the crowds in Yosemite Valley during the peak season. It becomes so jammed with traffic that I choose not to go. I am also concerned about the small number of campsites available. It is extremely difficult to reserve a campsite during most of the season.

I would like to see shuttles for day use to cut down on Valley traffic.

Correspondence ID: 405 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 10:51:58

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

My feeling is that too many people are allowed in the back country. The park should reduce permits by at least 20%.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue is the impact of visitors. My understanding is that bears are destroyed after their first incident with humans. Bears are an integral part of the park experience and by reducing the amount of visitors maybe more bears can be spared.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 406 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I believe the NPS genuinely has a desire to do a great good for our public to access NPS resources, however due to red tape, policy, and procedure their ability to improve seems to go nowhere.

Topic Question 2:

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for Universities, sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. since 2008 it has become increasingly difficult for Universities to gain access for co curricular activities in national forest and national parks lands.

Comments: I recently attended the governors recreation summit hosted in Salt Lake City where speakers spoke of a desire to have more youth and 18-24 year old participants visiting national parks. If this is truly a desire of the NPS then open access through a reasonable process of acquiring special use permits for Institutions where youth and young adults are found. University Outdoor Programs are great partners for a number of reasons: State regulated, incredible risk management plans, qualified/ certified professionals, not for profit (an assurance we will not compromise policy and procedure for money), service learning, and our trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

I hope that as NPS administrators are considering ways to improve on the Yosemite Wilderness Management Plan that more consideration will be given to

providing a means of acquiring special use permits for University Outdoor Programs.

Correspondence ID: 407 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 11:49:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate that the park service recognizes the impact that too many users can have on wilderness and the wilderness experience. Limiting the number of users on Half Dome's cables is a prime example that comes to mind.

Topic Question 2:

I believe the most important issues for wild places in Yosemite NP today are problems related to the huge number of visitors in the Wilderness. Obviously, the easiest way to reduce human impacts is to reduce the number of humans in an area. I think limiting group size to 8 or less could be a very powerful tool. Large groups have a disproportionate affect on the landscape and other users. Smaller groups, combined with more and more effective LNT education for backcountry users could be an excellent way to address the numbers problem.

Comments: I am a professional mountain guide living and working in the Eastern Sierra (Mammoth Lakes). I believe that the way wilderness is currently being managed in Yosemite does not provide enough and enough diversity of opportunity for park visitors who want a guide for their wilderness experience.

As a professional guide one of the ways I enhance and facilitate the experience of wild places for my clients is through stewardship, both as a practitioner and an educator. One of my prime roles is to pass along a greater appreciation for wild places and the tools to take care of them.

A well trained guide can also provide information and guidance to the unguided public when park staff are unavailable. Many times I provide trail information or Leave-No-Trace advice to users who are not my clients when there are no backcountry staff in the area. In short I think the presence of well trained professional mountain guides can benefit the unguided public and the park's resources, as well as guided clients.

Since rock climbing and mountaineering guiding are not currently at full capacity additional opportunities should be created for limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

I believe that high-level professional training benefits the guide, the guided client, the non-guided public, and wild places by making the guide better at what he or she does. I hope the NPS would consider that when determining criteria for a CUA. The American Mountain Guide's Association (AMGA) is the only domestic organization training and credentialing guides at this level.

Correspondence ID: 408 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Yosemite is one of the most visited National parks in the world. Yosemite has the responsibility to set the precedence on wilderness management. I feel the Park rises to this responsibility and historically errors on the conservative side.

Topic Question 2:

Finding an appropriate balance of protection and end user outcomes will seemingly contradict one another. With proper education and wilderness protocol, the over arching intent of the National Park system can be preserved without undue impact.

Comments: As one of the premier outdoor educators in the world, Outward Bound California has been providing character building wilderness opportunities for under-served youth and Veterans for over 50 years. It is essential that all youth have access to their protected lands and are provided an opportunity to discover life-long change and perspective that only these inspiring and remote landscapes can provide.

Currently the limitations set on group sizes for off-trail travel across the park hinders a youth's ability to engage in remote wilderness. Establishing comprehensive group dynamics is the cornerstone of an Outward Bound course. These larger group sizes of 8-10 students create and draw upon tangible life outcomes and development. A student body of six does not allow for a wide range in social make up, perspective and diversity nor allows for greater problem-solving and conflict resolution skills to emerge. It is imperative that the Park strongly considers raising the group size limits to outfitters like Outward Bound that are providing positive change and social responsibility to our youth of tomorrow.

Outward Bound has been an industry leader in low impact wilderness travel through our collaboration with Leave No Trace ethics. Additionally, with service being one of our primary organizational outcomes, we are consistently providing environmental stewardship opportunities to our students and creating a mutually beneficial relationship with our land managers.

Correspondence ID: 409 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Our members value the choice to visit the wilderness by hiking, by horseback, or by packing in with horse or mule to camp in the back country. Stock use for packing in privately or commercially is a treasured historical use of the park and should be allowed to continue to provide an opportunity to visitors that are physically unable to venture on their own into the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Numbers of visitors: improve equestrian access, provide additional trailheads parking and camping, improve signage, provide education to prevent conflicts, seek partnerships for maintenance, build alternative sustainable trails, re-route trails, designate users and direction flow on certain trails.

Commercial stock use: education to the providers and visitors, find ways to mutually agree on limitations and regulations to continue to provide the benefits that they offer. Provide alternative access within the Park.

Comments:

The Nevada All-State Trail Riders, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. It was formed in 1968 for the purpose of preserving historical trails, by sponsoring and promoting horseback riding on these trails. Membership is open to interested individuals in all states.

Correspondence ID: 410 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 13:24:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Keeping it as pristine as possible for future generations.

Topic Question 2:

Dealing with trash- -minimize, recycle, prohibit, citations as needed, etc.

Too many people- -limits, quotas

Comments: 1. Two friends and I, all from California, were not able to get a JMT permit starting in Yosemite. We started in Mammoth and hiked to Tuolumne, then returned to Mammoth and went south. We were amazed that over 90% of JMT hikers we came across who got Yosemite entry permits were from out-of-state or another country. How did this happen?

2. My husband and I occasionally lead mule pack "spot trips" in Yosemite and other parts of the Sierra for the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. We would like to see the continuance of availability of these trips from the Tuolumne Pack Station and also allowing the Virginia Lakes Pack Station to make spot trips into the Yosemite backcountry. We are pleased to be able to bring small groups of people into the Yosemite backcountry to "show off" Yosemite's beauty and the need to conserve it. We practice Leave No Trace principles on these trips. There is usually not more than one trip in Yosemite each summer to minimize impact. We do believe it is important to expose people to Yosemite's treasures by use of these trips and recommend that they continue to be allowed.

Correspondence ID: 411 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 13:27:11

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Please do not change the current use of the Mule Rides in Yosemite. I am elderly and unable to make the hike into the high sierra camps. This last year I was able to take 2 of my grandchildren on this trip. It was glorious to see the beauty of the park and enjoy that with this next generation. We practiced "Leave no Trace" and packed out what we took in. My one granddaughter said to me one day, it is sad. I didn't understand her, until she said that she realized how few people will ever see this part of Yosemite. What a blessed day that was.

Topic Question 2:

It seems that the most impact is on the valley floor, where the . I realize that we do have to try and keep the wild in Yosemite, but we have to share that use with the populace. I like the idea of parking the rigs, and bussing around to the various sites if needed. The valley traffic has really gotten too impacted.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 412 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

In short, I value the very existence of wilderness management in Yosemite... without it, Yosemite would be a collection of hotels and the surrounding parking lots.

Topic Question 2:

The biggest challenge facing Yosemite Wilderness is the need to balance access and the profitability of the park service with the preservation of the very reason people are drawn to the place - nature.

Comments: Writing on behalf of AMGA, I would like to offer my support of access to guided climbing in Yosemite for AMGA certified guides. It has been my experience that AMGA certified guides will provide the kind of access to the rocks in Yosemite that the NPS would appreciate, with guests being offered a safe and sound experience and leaving no trace of their passing.

Correspondence ID: 413 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 13:47:47

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Incorporating technology in its management and asking for input!

Topic Question 2:

Expanding group size limits and opening up commercial climbing.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 414 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the way the park limits access via permits and encourages bear safety and education to those visiting the park. I respect the way the park values

keeping bears wild. Unfortunately some of the restrictions to the park are too excessive and limit access to student groups and essentially are making enjoying the wilderness a middle/upper class luxury. The organizations that I work for (Outward Bound California and Stanford University) takes students into the wilderness to experience leadership development and to encourage community building, conservation, and too many other positive experiences to list here. By limiting the group size to 8 (thus 6 students and 2 instructors) limits the educational development of our students. Experiencing the wilderness in larger groups helps aid better development of our students. Furthermore, by not allowing climbing experiences by other highly credited organizations outside of Yosemite Mountain School also limits accessibility to other students. I respect the

Topic Question 2:

One of the most important issues facing Yosemite Wilderness is overuse. Gaining access to Yosemite should not be reserved for those who can afford to book months ahead of time. Many people do not have the financial luxury of planning vacations months ahead of time. #1, A BUS SYSTEM NEEDS TO HAPPEN. #2 By allowing larger students groups, you are opening up the wilderness to future caretakers who can help implement conservation and protect our park in the future. Do not make this park an upperclass luxury. That is very "anti-wilderness" if you ask me.

Comments: Thank you for all you do for this park.

Correspondence ID: 415 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

As a long time stock owner and trail rider that's getting up in years, I may never get the chance to travel and explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock, but really like the idea that "I could", and that my children or grandchildren "could".

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing wilderness on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

I understand access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain

visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: Thanks for the opportunity to comment!

Correspondence ID: 416 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 14:34:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I have only been there once, but I thought it was very clean.

Topic Question 2:

Most of the wilderness is not being used. The trails only go to traditional places, the rest of the wilderness is not used. You should develop parallel trail systems to existing places and trails to new places.

But the biggest problem is not enough young people using the wilderness.

Comments: Through I support the concept of people that want to hire a guide I should be able to do so. I do not support only AMGA guides. There are many other organization that train people in the skill of mountain /rock guiding. The AMGA is just one of them.

If there are any quota system commercial guides should only get 25% of the permits.

If you open climbing to more commercial guides. I would like to see guest guiding. If I live in Oregon and really like a local guide. I should be able to get a personal guide permit for him and me to come and climb in the park. The consumer or park visitor would get the permit NOT the guide company. There could be limits on how often a guiding company can be used for Personal Guide Permits so they just do not turn into another park concessionaire. Then I can hire the people I want to not the people the park thinks I have to go with.

Correspondence ID: 417 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 14:38:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

A great blend of trailed areas and off trail areas. Allowing for true adventure and exploration in little visited corners of the Park. From the selfish perspective as a private citizen I enjoy the quota system to the park's wilderness and limiting folks on half dome. That is my stance from a place of privilege as someone who has spent a lot of time in Yosemite climbing and backpacking and as a person with out barriers in place to my own use and enjoyment. As a global citizen, I think more can be done to allow access to those who are not traditional wilderness users.

Topic Question 2:

-Largest is clearly global warming, but that likely exceeds the scope of your wilderness plan. Prepare for it? Use what media platform you have to push politicians to quit denying its existence?

-Hetch Hetchy reservoir. Remove it, and place further down stream.

-Excessive horse on trail use. Tighter quota, required packing out of manure similar to Grand Canyon.

-Users forming lots of parallel trails, especially through meadows in the high country, where it starts to look like a wagon trail or two instead of a single hiking trail. As a person with trail crew experience I realize this is an uphill, no switch back battle.

Comments: I work for a non-profit that provides wilderness experiences for under served and under resourced youth. This individuals have barriers in place that often exclude them from enjoying our national parks. These barriers are often a combination of economics, access, and knowledge or skill base if their family does not camp.

I realize that the wilderness master plan in Yosemite can not address all of these barriers, but would like to see it do better where it can. By, opening up access for those non-profit user groups who are working to provide a wilderness experience. We are limited in Yosemite by group size limits off trail. An off trail group size limit being raised from 8 to 12 for non-profit user groups would be a huge step in that direction. Furthermore, currently the Yosemite Mountaineering school is the only allowed program for guiding in Yosemite. The only place our interests cross is wanting access. Our students can often not afford a guided climbing trip and are not going to be customers of YMS. We (and other programs like ours) are not seeking to bring more groups to Swan slab, or even the front country domes in Tuolumne. We often take new climbers to remote cliffs for top roping. The climbing sites that appeal to us are the short (40-80ft), low angled, and remote cliffs that are found through out the Sierra. Typically not sought out by other climbers. We use clean climbing practices and leave no trace of our use. However, we connect citizens to the wilderness and the history of climbing in Yosemite that would not otherwise be reached.

Correspondence ID: 418 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value how the Park's relationship with climbers has improved over the years and how active the Park is in maintaining a good relationship. I also value how hard the Park works to keep bears safe by being very diligent in reminding folks to put their food away, and usually in a nice way. I think this is important so that the rangers can maintain rapport with visitors.

Topic Question 2:

We at the Outward Bound School would like to take our groups off-trail in Yosemite. This would mean expanding the number of people allowed off-trail in a group to 12 people. This way, Outward Bound will impact the trails less, and not disturb other hikers with a large group that are on trail or at campsites that are on trail. We want to make this opportunity available to the teenagers and adults that we take on course, because we all know how much more amazing it is to hike off a trail than on one.

We would also like to give our students the opportunity to do multi-element courses in Yosemite; taking students climbing and backpacking, in the climbing Mecca of the world. Currently the Yosemite Mountaineering School is the only institution allowed to do technical activities with groups, and we would like to see this changed. In addition, we hope that a variety of certifications and climbing experience will make instructors eligible to instruct in the park, as an AMGA certification is very expensive and unaffordable for Outward Bound instructors. I hope that you consider allowing Outward Bound the opportunity to show our students the magic that is Yosemite by changing these two regulations.

Comments: In addition, I think there should be a strategy on how to keep cars out of Yosemite Valley. During peak season, there could be a parking lot and a shuttle that takes people into the park, unless they plan on camping overnight. Folks that are staying in the Ahwahnee or the lodge could easily take suitcases on a shuttle into the park. Bike rental prices could be much cheaper to encourage this as a mode of transportation around the valley.

I also think folks should be allowed to camp in their cars in Tuolumne. The campground is unaffordable for a lot of people, especially climbers. Less driving in and out of Tioga would happen each day if people could sleep in their cars in that area, since a lot of people drive out of the park to find a pullout to sleep in, and then drive back in the next day.

Thanks for having an open forum for people to share their thoughts.

Correspondence ID:	419	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan,26,2016 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 420 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value its strict regulations on Leave No Trace Ethics, and the amount of land within the park that's designated as wilderness. I also appreciate mandatory Bear Cans.

Topic Question 2:

The off-trail group size limit of 8 person is a major issue that needs to be addressed. The size limit should be increased, In my opinion, to 12. As an instructor for the Outward Bound School in California, I value opportunities to travel and navigate off-trail, as well as the challenges and experiences my students face off-trail. It's a whole new challenge and brings forth immense opportunities for growth as an individual and growth as a crew. And with your size limit of 8, we're unable to provide this amazing opportunity to our students in Yosemite. That means only 6 students, which is not economically feasible nor a preferred group size of students. Please expand the off-trail group size limit, you will providing a real benefit to future generations of Outward Bound students.

Comments: I also find it unfair that the Yosemite Mountain School is the only organization allowed to run commercial rock climbing programs in the park. The Outward Bound school has many qualified AMGA certified instructors capable of running safe and professional climbing programs. To grant only one organization this opportunity isn't right. The Outward Bound School will benefit from being able to run multiple course elements for its students within Yosemite, perhaps reaching a greater number of students, thus exposing more young people to the Park.

Correspondence ID: 421 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a trail rider and own stock. I look forward to traveling with a pack trip to explore Yosemite Wilderness. Pack animals have long been a part of the wilderness tradition. I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future. Seeing Yosemite on horseback is a experience that cannot be replicated by other means. I am a senior and I ride my horse all the time; unable to travel very far with two bad knees other than on horseback. I think the use of pack stock as a management tool is very important to keeping and preserving Yosemite Wilderness. Stock and pack animals are after all natural;they make minimal impact on the wilderness. I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current Yosemite Wilderness management. Thank you for some freedom to pack stock to travel,camp and graze in the park wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I am a member of the Back Country Horsemen. We work to minimize visitor conflict through education and practice of Leave No Trace technique. There is a need of visitor education both for hikers and stock users. The park service should consider the use of interpretive materials at wilderness trail heads. This way hikers, backpackers and stock users will know what everyone is to do of they encounter each other on the trail. Helping eliminate conflict. Back Country Horsemen of California and its partner the Pacific Crest Trail Association are more than willing to partner with WSP to work for a better Yosemite Wilderness. Thank You for your time Phyllis Hrastich

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 422 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Trail systems, ranger presence, permitting process, LNT education.

Topic Question 2:

I think it is important to increase the group size limit. Right now, concentrating large groups along trails actually works against dispersing impact. I think groups should continue to be thoroughly educated about LNT and held responsible for following those principles. It seems that most issues with LNT currently, however, are near trails (especially the JMT) and roads. I think the park could do more to enforce LNT in these areas. I also think that there is no reason for the Yosemite Mountaineering School to have a monopoly on technical activities within the park. Opening up these activities to other organizations, if done tactfully, could help diversify the ways in which people connect with the park. In the case of Outward Bound, the areas where we rock climb with groups are usually rarely used by other recreational rock climbers. I don't think that competition for more popular climbing areas would be

an issue. Lastly, and most importantly, for the love of God get livestock out of the park. In my lifetime, I suspect I will have to begin treating drinking water up there in the mountains. Livestock are an eyesore and they are working against all the good work you all do to help take care of those fragile alpine environments.

Comments: Thanks for all the hard work and for helping take care of such a special place!

Correspondence ID: 423 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 15:53:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

All in all i am satisfied the way Yosemite Wilderness is being managed. However i would like to see a very strict enforcement of the "Leaving no trace behind". Hikers, campers, and trekkers must make sure to leave the wilderness as pristine as possible.

Topic Question 2:

I would say the air pollution, fire danger, and feeding the wildlife by humans.

Comments: 1. The Mule Packs serves a very important function. They make it possible for the citizen to see and enjoy the true wilderness. They should be provided some extra training and technology to keep the foot print to a minimum. I would not be in favor of eliminating Mule services, as long as, it is the only way to see and enjoy the our wilderness. Mule packs do a very important service.

Correspondence ID: 424 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I most value the wilderness itself and it's trail system, as opposed to amenities such as the High Sierra Camps. But as I age (currently 70) I see the value of these amenities to seniors and the disabled, and I would not want to deprive them of access. I am also an equestrian, and when the day comes that I can no longer travel the Yosemite wilderness under my own power I hope that I will still be able to ride a horse there. Please protect equestrian access!

Topic Question 2:

1. Defunding of federal wilderness maintenance by a congress that would rather see it in commercial hands. Please use what little funding is available to maintain existing trails, rather than build new ones. And please reach out to private wilderness travelers, backpackers and equestrians, to help patrol the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 425 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

see comments

Topic Question 2:

see comments

Comments: This is an article I wrote publicly and also incorporates my comments. The full article in original form with media can be viewed here <http://www.sierramnguides.com/the-future-of-wilderness-and-guiding-in-yosemite-national-park/>

As the focus of the nation remains on presidential politics and the associated reality television drama that it represents, Yosemite National Park is quietly having their own opportunity to revamp its management program as they re-evaluate their Wilderness Stewardship Plan. It is not prominent in news headlines beyond some small scale local press. People may assume that this is just a process that government agencies do, and that nothing will really change, and that if there are currently issues then they will somehow get addressed. As with presidential elections, people can make a difference, if they are active and involved with the process. An important difference between this and presidential elections is that we can have a voice every 4 years. The last time the Yosemite Wilderness Plan was re-evaluated was 27 years ago, in 1989. Who knows when the next opportunity might be? If you have any ideas for the future of one of our nations greatest land assets, now would be a good time to weigh in.

Did you know that 94% of Yosemite National Park is considered wilderness? This acreage includes nearly everything within ~100 yards from the roads, buildings, shops, restaurants, lodges, campgrounds, lights, dumpsters, restrooms and other civilized amenities that make up the Yosemite Valley tourism infrastructure. That means that nearly everything we know and love about the Park - recreationally as climbers, mountaineers, hikers, and skiers - is in designated wilderness. Wilderness management is guided primarily by the Wilderness Act of 1964. The definition of wilderness is one of the more contentious and ambiguous aspects of that law. Wilderness is defined in section 2(c):

A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of mans work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Now picture that ideal of wilderness against some randomly collected images of actual Yosemite wilderness areas:

- Common scene at the Half Dome cables. A city park in the heart of the wilderness John Muir Trail
- Swan Slab is a heavily impacted wilderness area located ~100 feet from the road.

- Even the roadside big walls are considered wilderness, despite that photos like this can be taken from the road. Climbers on popular routes often camp using heavy equipment, fixed anchors, and alongside other groups of people.
- A common scene from the Nutcracker, a very popular rock climb in the Yosemite wilderness.
- High Sierra Camps existed before the Wilderness Act and are granted exceptions. There are 7 camps in Yosemite National Park, 5 located in designated wilderness.

I wonder if many people actually think these places fit in with the intended designation of wilderness. If people go somewhere in large volumes, day after day, with the help of significant constructed access infrastructure, how can it be classified as wilderness? Should one be able to park their RV on the side of the road and, without removing their bathrobe or putting on shoes, stumble into wilderness? The Wilderness Stewardship Plan re-evaluation is looking to, among other things, incorporate new policy direction and definitions for wilderness character as they look to add even more wilderness areas to the existing wilderness inventory within the park.

Wilderness is certainly a double edged sword. The designation legally protects amazing places country from development and destruction. On the other hand, it also limits management options. The wilderness designation is extremely difficult to reverse and in fact, land agencies are under directives to continually inventory and propose new areas to potentially include into wilderness. As wilderness areas increase and populations increase, we see a higher concentration of impact on resources in more accessible places. In wilderness, there are few things managers can do other than limit the numbers of people allowed per day. We see this in places like Half Dome and Mount Whitney. This year, on Half Dome, people are no longer able to start in the Inyo National Forest and get granted access to a Half Dome permit. On Mount Whitney, after ending guiding on the Whitney Trail they hold a lottery to grant access there. They recently expanded the permitting system there to also include the North Fork of Lone Pine Creek where increased demand and limited supply has increased the use of that drainage to access the peak by more challenging routes.

Another thing they have done in response to increasing demand is to raise costs. In the early days the cost was \$2/night for lodging and meals at the High Sierra Camps. In 1993 Delaware North, a large entertainment and hospitality corporation took over all of the concessions in the park. This past year, the concession was given to Aramark, a much larger multinational corporation. Cost is now \$180/night. What will happen to our park, and the accessible wilderness that we enjoy so much that dominates it, as a single powerful corporate entity seeks to increase visitation and revenues?

Though it is tiny and pathetic within the park economic-industrial complex, guiding services are one of the commercial uses allowed by the park under the Wilderness Act. The Wilderness Stewardship Plan determines what guiding services are permitted to operate, how much commercial use is allowed, where, and when. Though there are numerous permitted backpacking and hiking guide services, the only guide service allowed to offer roped technical rock climbing in Yosemite National Park is Yosemite Mountaineering School, an entity owned and managed by Aramark, the sole concessionaire in the park.

As the Wilderness Stewardship Plan gets revamped we have an opportunity to have a voice in how the limited and heavily impacted resources should be managed. Land managers rely on public comment, by law, and often in the absence of useful data on which to base critical decisions. You can submit your opinions, observations, and comments about how the Yosemite Park wilderness areas should be better managed before January 29th, 2016 [HERE](#).

As a long standing mountain guide service that operates in and around Yosemite, we are going to send the following constructive comments. We ask that if you agree with us that you consider including some of these points into your own comments. They will weigh more coming from individuals within the general public than from us.

Here is ours:

- We believe that guides have a net positive impact on wilderness areas: the land, people, and the wilderness character - therefore more of it should be allowed.
- - Guides have the comfort, familiarity, and expertise to move with their guests through terrain that is less frequently traveled, less impacted, and more remote. This reduces the impacts on more accessible and more heavily used areas and routes.
- - Guides increase the safety of the recreating public, not only for their paying guests but for any others in the vicinity. When making hazardous mountain areas so accessible to the general public, it is an ethical responsibility to take measures to mitigate risks. Yosemite has maintained guard rails and cables for this reason. It maintains a well trained and locally based search and rescue team. Guides are trained as Wilderness First Responders or better and should be considered an important component of an emergency response system in wilderness locations.
- - Guides reduce the chances of accidents and incidents in the first place through their training, experience, and judgment. They impart knowledge and skills to their guests and the general public through instruction and good example. Contact with guides helps recreational wilderness users become better at their own personal risk management over time. This results in fewer accidents and calls for rescue. This in turn reduces taxpayer costs and the risks and impacts of conducting rescue operations. Rescue operations do affect the character of wilderness. Measures should be taken to minimize the need for wilderness rescue. Guides play a positive role in helping to achieve that.
- Trained and certified guides have been trained and assessed in accordance with national industry standards. We believe that in the new Wilderness Stewardship Plan, it is essential not only that all guide service employees comply with wilderness medical standards (as is currently required), but that all guides for technical climbing activities be required to meet minimum industry-accepted standards for training and credentialing within their scope of practice. It is important to require standards for the ability for a guide to manage risk and avoid accidents, just as it is for the ability to respond in the aftermath of an accident. It is contradictory to require one of these important aspects of risk management without the other. We believe that the public should be ensured the right to hire a climbing guide with industry-accepted guiding training and credentials.
- - Guides understand the importance of preservation of wilderness character as it is integral to the quality of the experience they seek to provide. Any degradation of the quality of a climbing route or wilderness itinerary will impact the value of the experience they provide. We believe that all guides should be required to have demonstrated that they understand and adhere to the principles of Leave No Trace. We believe that such training and proficiency should be required for permitting of guides on all public lands. With such training, and being able to hold guide services accountable for their practices, it can be assured that guides and their will always be model wilderness users and train their guests to be the same. In this regard, it can be said that guides have a net positive effect on the state of the wilderness areas they visit with their groups. As such, increasing professional guiding service days should be considered a key strategy in any long-term stewardship plan.

- Competition breeds excellence. We believe that it is not in the best interest of the public for all park concessions to be run as a monopoly. We believe that the guided public experience is compromised significantly when they are only given one choice in who may guide them on any itinerary. Currently, the Wilderness Plan allows for several outfitters to compete to provide non-technical guiding services such as hiking and backpacking. In our view, the same standard should also be applied to technical climbing guiding services. We believe that the park has enough resources and opportunity available to accommodate a greater number of guiding businesses, even if on a more limited basis than what is available to the current sole concessionaire. We have seen every other National Park in the country, most recently Rainier National Park and Rocky Mountain National Park, come to the conclusion that a sole concession for guiding operations is inferior to a system that allows for some competition in providing these services. We believe the park should be able to

hold a permittee accountable for poor performance without risking an interruption in an important public service. This can only be achieved by allowing multiple permittees.

- We believe that when an area ceases to conform to the character described by the definition of wilderness in the Wilderness Act, that it be considered for removal from wilderness, or somehow otherwise newly designated in a way that allows for common sense management of the resource. We do not believe that new wilderness can be added indefinitely, and that imperative in the law should be amended, putting resources instead into better managing what wilderness areas we already have, particularly those at risk. We advise that commercial guiding be considered as a tool to help managers reduce or concentrate impacts in order to protect the special places that the Wilderness Act was designed to preserve.
Thank you for your consideration of all of these comments.

Correspondence ID: 426 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 16:27:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value my ability to access the wilderness in a variety of ways, on foot, with stock support, on stock. I appreciate the limits on the numbers of people and stock allowed in any one area at any one time. We go to experience nature and the wilderness, not to create a city in the midst of it.

Topic Question 2:

The number of visitors to Yosemite Valley, and their impact on the environment.

Keep us all mindful of preserving this national treasure with instructions on how to act while there, and, if needed, restrict usage/individual transportation.

Comments: I appreciate being able to access the wilderness both by foot and on stock, or with stock support, as I get older. Please consider that all wilderness users eventually need support as you make wise choices to keep the wilderness wild.

Correspondence ID: 427 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 16:32:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: It is not in the best interest of the public for all park concessions to be run as a monopoly. We believe that the guided public experience is compromised significantly when they are only given one choice in who may guide them on any itinerary. Currently, the Wilderness Plan allows for several outfitters to compete to provide non-technical guiding services such as hiking and backpacking. In our view, the same standard should also be applied to technical climbing guiding services. We believe that the park has enough resources and opportunity available to accommodate a greater number of guiding businesses, even if on a more limited basis than what is available to the current sole concessionaire. We have seen every other National Park in the country, most recently Rainier National Park and Rocky Mountain National Park, come to the conclusion that a sole concession for guiding operations is inferior to a system that allows for some competition in providing these services. We believe the park should be able to hold a permittee accountable for poor performance without risking an interruption in an important public service. This can only be achieved by allowing multiple permittees.

Correspondence ID: 428 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the park is being taken care of and that there seems to be a real concern for the environment

Topic Question 2:

For me it is commercial access. There is only one avenue to guide rock climbing in Yosemite which is YMS. I'm a and AMGA IFMGA Guide who makes my sole living off of commercial guiding. This includes, rock, ski, and alpine climbing. Yosemite is a special place and the way modern guiding works is to establish a client base and then service them around the world. My clients find it odd that I can not take them to Yosemite which is a disservice to the public.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 429 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I like the quota system and the helpfulness of the wilderness center rangers. Also appreciate the mule pack trains for all the spot trip opportunities. Mules also are very useful for trail workers.

Topic Question 2:

raise more nature lovers - so they and the next generation could continue to protect the wilderness. In order to attract more people to visit the wilderness, some means are necessary to enable them when they could not back pack into the wilderness.

Comments: I like to see the Tuolumne Meadow mule pack station continues doing the "spot trip" service for hikers, private or organized. This is very important to me because this will allow more accessibility to the public when people have physical limitation doing backpack trips. The wilderness is to be enjoyed by as many people as possible.

Correspondence ID: 430 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 17:35:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that

-- stewardship projects and community outreach is being prioritized

--climbers can climb and sleep on big walls like el cap and leaning tower without registering or being managed in terms of maximum user days.

Topic Question 2:

User impact. Encourage more biking with actual bike lanes going around the entire Valley floor and up in Tuolumne Meadows. Discourage car use through more shuttles (and bikes). Continue stewardship projects and utilizing volunteers from all over to increase awareness and caretaking experience among users. Continue to minimize the red tape/bureaucracy to individuals volunteering on an impromptu basis (eg: when a climber arrives in Yosemite and realizes that he or she has a few days that could be spent volunteering. Be ready for this with ongoing services that they can volunteer to do)

Comments: Allow for more guide services to work in Yosemite. The monopoly by YMS is unfair.

Correspondence ID: 431 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 18:35:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

By allowing the High Sierra Camps to exist, the NPS allows access to the wilderness for individuals who are unable to backpack. In addition, the NPS Ranger guided hikes to the Camps, allow people (who have enough time) to go to all the camps while learning about the geology, and the flora and fauna of the high Sierra.

Topic Question 2:

Each generation of children need to learn to love the wilderness so that its future can be assured. One way that happens is if they can get into the mountains at an early age. I see many families at the High Camps with children too young (or parents too old) to backpack. By providing them the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the wilderness, the High Camps help create the future advocates for the park.

Comments: When a Yosemite plan was being created in the early 1970s, I commented that the High Camps allowed my grandmother (in her 80s at the time) and my parents (in their 60s) to enjoy the wilderness. Now my grandmother is no longer living but I am in my 60s and would not be able to go into the high Sierra if I couldn't go to a High Sierra Camp or on a trip with stock to carry my gear. The Camps are a historic part of the park. Please allow them to stay open so those of us who are no longer young can still have access. Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 432 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 18:57:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value how park employees particularly SAR take personal pride in keeping the wilderness accessible and wild.

Topic Question 2:

More guide services should be allowed to operate in YNP wilderness. Guides increase safety and promote LNT ethics to their guests. Everyone would benefit from more guide services being allowed in the park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 433 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The availability of campgrounds with reserved campsites, backpacking permits, "spot trip" services from independent pack stations, and food/supplies in Yosemite Valley, Wawona, and Tuolumne Meadows AND, of course, the vast maintained-trail system.

Topic Question 2:

Overwhelming demand [quotas when/where needed and public transportation in Yosemite Valley] AND funding [donations and federal budget] for necessary development and maintenance issues.

Comments: Specifically, I'd very much like for the Tuolumne Meadows Pack Station to continue providing "spot trip" services AND for the Virginia Lakes Pack Station to continue to be allowed to provide such services entering the Yosemite National Park Wilderness via the Hoover Wilderness.

Thanks and keep up the good work!!

Correspondence ID: 434 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 20:17:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the opportunity to go rock climbing in Yosemite. It's one of the most amazing places in the entire world to experience climbing.

Topic Question 2:

I think that one of the most important issues is that only one company is allowed to offer guided climbing in Yosemite National Park. It makes no sense that this one guide service should be the only one able to operate in one of the best climbing areas in the world. If there were multiple guiding services to

choose from then it would create competition the provide the best service possible and the quality of the products would increase dramatically. It would also help with the impact on our wilderness area by brining in a more rounded group of guides that would be specifically trained and certified in their areas of practice. Having better guides/wilderness ambassadors would bring more awareness to how our wilderness is impacted which would help shape a better understanding for the general public and all recreational climbers entering and using this resource.

Comments: Bring in more climbing guide services to the park! We need to shake things up and brig more awareness to how our wilderness is impacted!

Correspondence ID: 435 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Preservation of wilderness and protection of a wild, untrammeled experience!

Topic Question 2:

Preservation. Ever-increasing use and expectations from the public mean NPS has to be vigilant and thoughtful about its use policies. I appreciate how well NPS/Yosemite has protected the wilderness experience away from the more crowded areas of the Park.

Comments: As NPS certainly knows, Yosemite is one of the marquee destinations for rock climbing in the world. Unfortunately the Park has been closed to the vast majority of certified mountain guides for decades. The sole-concessionaire model limits competition, denies the public a choice in choosing a mountain guide, and bars certified/qualified mountain guides from working within the Park. This model prioritizes employment with YMS over credentials, certification, and merit--European and Canadian mountain guides are utterly bewildered when they learn that most American mountain guides (including most if not all of the 109 internationally licensed ones) cannot guide in Yosemite, simply because of the sole-concession model.

It's time Yosemite lead the NPS in crafting a smart, thorough, and fair commercial guiding model. I suggest developing a program that allows regulated, managed use for certified American mountain guides. Guides certified through the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) are well schooled in Leave No Trace principles, as well as risk management, and overall client satisfaction. They would be a low-impact, welcome addition to the Yosemite scene and give the general public a real choice in their adventure/climbing experience.

Rocky Mountain National Park finally expanded its commercial opportunities to six companies from one and although the program isn't perfect, at least the general public now has a variety of choices and options in a guide service. Yosemite should reward certification/quality/merit, rather than protect a sole concession's monopoly on commercial rock guiding in Yosemite.

Thanks- -Rob Coppolillo, IFMGA-licensed mountain guide and owner of Vetta Mountain Guides

Correspondence ID: 436 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 20:37:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The park provides great frontcountry access for those who desire that experience, while maintaining a wonderful and vast wilderness that, while not totally virgin, provides a beautiful, wild experience. Maintaining as much area as possible for human-powered adventure will preserve a special experience, while supporting access to those experiences makes them available for the most people possible.

Topic Question 2:

Access to responsible, well-trained guides is crucial as the number of wilderness users increases. These guides can bring stewardship and safety to those groups that retain their services, while having the consciousness and ethics to never interfere with the experience of independent groups. To ensure the best experience for park visitors, it is important that multiple guide services are authorized for commercial use, while requiring high standards in training for those services who are permitted.

Comments: Permitting multiple guide services, including small, independent contractors, will allow guided recreation in the park to match the diversity found in frontcountry use. Guided groups, especially those selected based on training criteria (e.g. AMGA) can be counted on to not violate park regulations, to follow leave-no-trace principles, to act in a friendly manner towards other visitors, and to have a much lower likelihood of needing costly rescue.

Correspondence ID: 437 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 21:10:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Keeps it open to the public.

Topic Question 2:

Guides enhance, educate, and protect the beauty of the land. Guiding should be opened in Yosemite.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 438 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the integration of the climbing community. I'm grateful the climbing community has a voice

Topic Question 2:
Crowds and accidents.

I believe have a more open policy for professional guides or a working relationship with AMGA certified guides and business would help provide more guides to the public. It would help to encourage a culture of guiding among the american public.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 439 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 21:55:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The beauty of the wilderness is not overwhelmed with commercial ventures. The High Sierra Camps are friendly, funky, and unique. Not Disneyland at 9000 ft.

Topic Question 2:

Probably right now, the doubt. With budget cuts and so many damaged trees about to fall, just maintaining public safe on trails will be a big project. I'm also concerned with increasing admissions costs. We already pay for these parks as taxpayers. To add Big user taxes on top of that as admission fees will keep poorer people out. Which may be your intention, but pay-to-play is not a value I like.

Comments: I support horses/mules in the Park. I started hiking the HS Camps with my parents when I was 6. Now, at 68 and 2 bouts of cancer, I can't hike more than 4 miles. My horse is my ATV. My horse friends keep a "clean camp" for us. We buy the clean hay use other approved methods to avoid damage. As the population ages, I won't be the only one who will have to give up the back country without my horse. And maybe a mule to carry our gear. Issue permits, check our gear, have fines for slob. But please don't ban equines from the park.

Correspondence ID: 440 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am pleased that the NPS has supported stock use in the wilderness. It is the only option for me to see this beautiful area. I am 76 years old and not able to hike far enough to appreciate the wilderness, but I can still navigate on my horse.

Topic Question 2:

I am hoping that the NPS will continue to support stock use. Educating all users on trail etiquette would be helpful for eliminating conflict amongst user groups. BCHC is a strong proponent of LNT (leave no trace) use of the wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 441 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 22:32:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

NPS has made this area accessible without jeopardizing it's quality

Topic Question 2:

maintain accessibility. why are you guys locking up the bear boxes?

Comments: I have been joining the LA Sierra Mule packs for the past 3 years. Stop the mule "spot trips" and you will effectively shut down the wilderness for those who can't or won't carry a 30 pound back pack or who want to change their underwear once in a while.

Correspondence ID: 442 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,26,2016 23:50:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The possibility to enter the park and experience some form of wilderness on a daily basis.

Topic Question 2:

Changing names of iconic landmarks and buildings, allowing access to climbers.

Comments: I would like to see the park opening itself to mountain guides who are the ambassadors to the wilderness. We are the true stewards taking people beyond the paved roads and visitor's centers.

Please take into consideration the amount of exposure and education we can provide not only our clients but a large part of the population on a whole.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 443 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness as present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I have packed in from Red's Meadow on one of the most glorious trips of my life. I can't imagine access by horseback being cut off to this area. I was in complete disbelief when I heard of plans to do just that. It's simply impossible for me to comprehend such an action to historical trails that have been used for centuries. Don't deny future generations the opportunity to experience Yosemite as their ancestors did, and the best way possible in my opinion ...from the back of a horse!

Correspondence ID:	444	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan.27.2016 02:10:52				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the way the park allows visitors into the wilderness in order for the public to truly appreciate what is there. I also value the maintenance of the parks roads and other access points. It is an incredible park that should be open to all to visit.

Topic Question 2:

An important issue facing the Yosemite Wilderness today is the lack of permits allowed to professional guides who want to share the park in a safe and responsible way with their clients.

I first visited the park when I was 14 with my family. My brother was rock climbing there and volunteering with the Search and Rescue team. My brother brought me climbing for the first time and it changed my life. I am now a climber myself, as well as a Rock Guide, certified by the American Mountain Guide Association (AMGA).

There are a lot of challenges for mountain guides in the US with the permitting system that exists, but one of the saddest cases is with Yosemite. It is one of the crown jewels of our country, and yet there is a monopoly on permits in Yosemite. Its difficult when a client, who wants to experience the wilderness safely and responsibly, has to be told that they can't visit the Park with a guide they know and trust.

I think it would be an incredible achievement if the park allowed for additional guiding opportunities in the form of low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that would be reasonable for individuals and small businesses to obtain. I believe that it would highly improve the diversity of users, as well as the quality of the experience. In addition, if the requirement of certification went along with the permit qualifications, I believe it would have a positive impact on safety, it would increase the education of best use practices (such as LNT which AMGA guides are educated in, and share with their clients), and overall experience by increasing the diversity of the users.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 445 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 04:08:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
education and maintenance of access

Topic Question 2:

there currently is very little access for the general public to hire a guide of their choice.

For the general public i think it would be important for there to be a level of stewardship that is professional and certified - such as the AMGA or IFMGA in the climbing/mountaineering realm.

Comments: I would hope there will be additional resources for the public to hire a guide of their choice that is trained to the utmost level. to that end there should be the capability that an independent guide should have access to low ratio CUA's.

Correspondence ID: 446 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I realize that all the lands need some management...however going to the extreme of keeping people OUT of the wilderness on horses is going too far. That it is supervised I can endorse but stopping access I can not support.

Topic Question 2:

I imagine it's over access. I imagine that that is from vehicles running through the park, stopping and plugging up the roads. Maybe use the university models....park on the outside of the parks in provided parking lots and use buses that folks can get off and on all day. As for equestrians, the rigs could be parked in lots around the perimeter and access to trails accessed there. I would someday like to ride my horse there and I'm from Kansas. Since its public land, I'd like it to stay that way.

Comments: Please don't exclude horse access to the park. Our future is with our citizens who can take care of themselves and value the world around them. Horseback riders are the last of the adventurers in this country. I think most take very good care of their horses and the environment they traverse. They will help to save these wildernesses years down the line from the pressures of future societies. If you close it to everyone but those that walk, many will never know of the wonders of nature and therefore not care down the line if the rules are changed again. Also if less and less folks go into the backcountry, then it becomes an excellent hideout for the deviants in our society. All food for thought. Please leave the trails open!!!

Correspondence ID: 447 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 09:30:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Keeping large corporate interests at bay and maintaining a sustainable link between the greater public and the wilderness. Thank you for allowing millions of people per year to recreate in the beauty of Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

CUA with AMGA certified guides: I believe that by limiting guiding to only one concession holder, the park is settling to deal with "the devil you know." However by allowing AMGA credentials to dictate a permit system in the park it will allow park visitors to enjoy a better quality product as well as create more opportunities for guides across the country. We can agree that the trade routes in the park are often crowded, allowing guides to take clients away from those trade routes - on to climbs less traveled - it could disperse a part of the climbing population.

Comments: Honestly, I believe the NPS would be better suited by adopting a more European model of guiding. By allowing an outside organization to regulate the terms of approval (much like many other aspects of government controlled regulations in this country) the NPS could create more opportunity for the individual guides across America.

Please consider allowing CUA's on a credential basis.

Correspondence ID: 448 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 09:35:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

My experience is that good management practices are being used widely in Yosemite, like minimizing erosion from trails and at water crossings. Getting out in this country is a real joy.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues are how to make this country available to the widest most diverse use by all ages and nationalities while protecting the natural resources. The solitary experience is important, yet supervision is also necessary. I expect that diverse uses like horses and bicycles are being demanded yet I feel expanding these uses is inappropriate given the sensitive habitats and conditions.

Comments: I feel that trail and highway use threatens to encroach on the peace of the wilderness. Careful planning to not overextend to much more population is essential. I feel the High Sierra Camps should remain as they are an important key to maintaining access for a population that otherwise could not reach deep into the wilderness, as well as providing important links to the national park community.

Correspondence ID: 449 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 10:06:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 450 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Limits and monitors use of the backcountry with their permitting system.

Topic Question 2:

The amount of JMT and PCT hikers that are trampling the JMT and the 200 yards on either side of the trail. These users should be more tightly controlled. They are generally unskilled and un-knowledgeable users who don't realize the damage they're doing and the impact they have on other users of the National Park and Forest.

Comments:

I think one way that Yosemite can use outside resources to help with controlling users and enforcing things like LNT and general stewardship of the land is to allow more commercial use permits to reputable organizations. Guide services and Outdoor Education organizations have knowledgeable staff who generally respect the wilderness and know how to travel in it to cause as little harm as possible. If more people were encouraged to enter the wilderness through these means they would learn how to properly behave in these environments. Allowing Guide services to obtain permits for the JMT ahead of time will enable more people to sign up for these trips instead of trying to do it themselves and having to be rescued by park employees or create great harm because they don't know what they're doing.

Yosemite Mountaineering School currently has a monopoly on climbing permits in the Park and that does not seem like a fair system. Letting organizations like Outward Bound California have permits to rock climb in the park will open up this element to many different people.

Outdoor education organizations create environmental stewards at a young age and these people will grow up to respect, value and protect our National Parks and public lands. This may seem like a pitch for organizations to make more money, but I think that outdoor professionals have a positive impact on our public lands and there is no cost to the Park by having more of them out there in the wilderness and they can set good examples and potentially help others out when they need it.

Correspondence ID: 451 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 10:40:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I feel that one of the most important issues in many parks around the country is the impact that people have on them. I don't think cutting back access to the public will solve the Impact issues. I believe that any number of persons can cause massive or little damage to an area, it depends on who is there. If the recreational activities such as rock climbing hiking and camping are done by professional guides and organizations, then there will be an entity there who wants to do their best in protecting there environment in which they work. The highest credentialed guide services are trained not only to provide excellent instruction and guiding but also in land stewardship. I believe that the park service can over see the big picture but would benefit from having highly trained professionals to manage all of the small details.

Correspondence ID: 452 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 10:56:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

What I value about the way the NPS manages the Yosemite Wilderness can be divided into three sections:

1) Ecological Paradigm: The NPS has had a varied history trying to balance the unforeseen contradictions set out by the Organic Act and the Lane Letter. Conserving wilderness in an "unimpaired condition" and "emphasizing park visitation" turn out be near mutually exclusive objectives in the twenty first century. I value the fact that the NPS (as well as Congress and Federal Courts) recognize that the former objective is the top priority. Using ecology and other natural sciences to govern how wilderness is managed has produced the most recent efforts to establish "buffer zones" around the park, to protect entire watersheds and airsheds, to

reduce invasive species and maintain the biodiversity which existed when the park was first established, as well as allowing wildfires to be wild and burn as they have for millennia. This type of management has come a long way since the days of public bear-feeding displays and the weekly "firefall" so I value the NPS' ability to course-correct.

2) Education: The only way to emphasize park visitation while maintaining the Yosemite Wilderness in an unimpaired condition is by providing transformative educational experiences for the public and especially for those who obtain the permits to access the backcountry. I value the NPS' current emphasis on education throughout the permitting process as well as the many interpretation discussions it offers, but I believe that in order to educate the public to the extent that they become true stewards of the environment will require a more experiential education with depth beyond the LNTB principles or a list of rules/regulations on the back of a permit. The NPS clearly does not have the resources to provide such instruction at the depth to be transformative nor the scale to be impactful, and perhaps they could use a little help. I address this issue in my comment below.

3) Law Enforcement: Enforcing the law of backcountry conservation is the exclusive role of the NPS. I value the work of the backcountry rangers. I value their ability to follow a strict code with a benign demeanor. Their nonthreatening presence is in perfect balance with their no-nonsense attitudes and their dedication to their cause should be the envy of law enforcement agencies everywhere. A backcountry ranger protects the wilderness without imposing their authority on those who are seeking to escape such daily societal pressures and taste the freedom that the wilderness provides. In so doing, the NPS ranger does all she can to preserve the physical and mental environments necessary for a true wilderness experience.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue facing the Yosemite Wilderness today is overuse. As has been stated many times before, "we are loving the Park to death." The issue is two fold and thus I suggest two solutions. The first issue is the traffic on Tioga Road, which in part leads to the second issue, which is the congestion and misuse of the backcountry.

In 1936, a wildlife technician with the NPS named Lowell Sumner wrote that Tioga Road "illustrates the complex, irrevocable, and perhaps partly unforeseen chain of disturbances' set into play when any such project is authorized." He was right. Traffic on Toga Road not only causes noise pollution, air pollution, and ugly roadside parking lots, but provides easy access to backcountry areas which should merit a more earnest effort to reach. Some potential solutions include issuing parking permits, restricting parking to established lots, and increasing public transport from the Valley (though this operation is already very efficient, environmentally friendly and one of the things the NPS has done well). In this way, vehicles using the road to cross the Sierra may still do so without adding to the circus that Tuolumne Meadows has become on any given Summer weekend. Tioga Road enables hikers of all abilities to reach places that one once had to work much harder to reach. Hard work is an essential element of backcountry travel. The 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Plan states that "the visitor must accept wilderness largely on its own terms. Modern conveniences are not provided for the comfort of the visitor; and the risks of wilderness travel, of possible dangers from accidents, wildlife, and natural phenomena must be accepted as part of the wilderness experience." Such is not the case when a group of boulderers can lug some beer and a large stereo to Vogelsang for the day. Nor is it very much in line with what the High Sierra Camps provide. Though, admittedly, clients as well as employees of the HSC seem to have an appreciation for nature, the impact caused by the comforts they are provided/providing are seen in water contaminated with e-coli, trails covered in mule feces, noise pollution, overgrazing, degraded single-track trails as well as multiple meandering trails. I will make no recommendation of my own with regard to the HSC, but would instead refer to The House Committee Report Recommendation attached to the 1984 California Wilderness Act which explicitly determines that "if and when it occurs that the confined operation of these facilities...result in an increased adverse impact on the adjacent wilderness environmentâ€the operation of these facilities will be promptly terminated, the facilities removed, the sites naturalized, andâ€the areas promptly designated as wilderness."

Backpackers make up the rest of the backcountry population. Though their backcountry experience theoretically has the least impact on wilderness, this is only the case when one possesses the proper skills, knowledge, and preparation. Backpacking is the most fitting way to gain an appreciation for wilderness. It is hard work, it is pensive, it is done at a pace slow enough to notice the minute details of the area's geological, geographical, and biological features yet fast enough to cover moderate ground. Backpackers

experience the wilderness in a way comparable to the first people who left society with the intention of making an ephemeral return to nature. Backpacking teaches self-sufficiency, grit, and an appreciation for land that has little evidence of our species. Professional and highly experienced backpackers cultivate such a profound appreciation for unaltered wilderness that it becomes their top priority to have no impact on its condition. For this reason, it is the policy of some national parks abroad, take Torres del Paine in Chile for example, that in order to access certain wilderness areas one must be accompanied by a professional guide, otherwise they must pass an exam proving their backcountry expertise and their ability to travel without leaving any trace. The former backpacker is educated by the guide, the latter has supposedly already acquired the education necessary to access such fragile ecosystems. In both cases, education is key.

The NPS is responsible for restricting backcountry populations through the permitting system and law enforcement efforts, but add experiential educational to the long list of the agency's responsibilities and the NPS simply becomes overextended. I therefore suggest that it is the role of professional guiding operations to fill the void by offering those who would seek wilderness the proper tools, preparation, and profoundly transformative educational experience necessary to convert laymen into true environmental stewards, for this is the most noble purpose of our National Parks.

Comments: The NPS was born one century ago, its enormous task established in the Organic Act of 1916. The Service was charged by the Federal Government "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life [of the National Parks] and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Two years later, the Lane Letter and the ambitious Stephen Mather directed the NPS to place a larger emphasis on providing for the enjoyment of the National Parks than leaving them unimpaired. In 1964, the Wilderness Act began the tide change that induced the further development of this legislation, which determined that the NPS' primary responsibility was conservation. Today, we are reviewing the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Plan from a perspective that could be described as entirely opposite to that with which the Lane Letter was written. After one century of service, it is important that the NPS recognize that to fulfill their ultimate duty to conservation as well as to the public will require no further oscillation between the two, but a bedrock stability that achieves balance between them. This kind of balance will entail a perspective that does not see the interest of conservation and the public as dichotomous ideas, but as two entities that inform each other to create what has been called "America's best idea." That is to say, that the greatest purpose of conserving pristine wilderness in the National Parks is to educate the public of the importance of doing so in all other places. The National Parks are our cathedrals, but they are also our universities, and through them we may create the political constituencies to further their cause and extend conservation beyond their rigid geographical boundaries. The Yosemite Wilderness Plan of 1989 alludes to education as being one of the tools for conservation. In Section D: Objectives, it states that "the Service will provide educational and interpretive media and programs to facilitate greater understanding and appreciation of wilderness values and to help visitors minimize resource impacts...These services will promote minimum impact techniques, proper food storage, and wilderness safety." The Plan goes on to determine in Section E: Interpretation that one of the major objectives the Service will provide in Wilderness Management will be "to shape perceptions and modes of visitor behavior that result in minimal resource impact and quality experience." I recently went on a trip through the Yosemite Wilderness with the Wildland Trekking Company, and I concluded that the aforementioned objectives outlined in the Yosemite Wilderness Plan are completely consistent, if not identical to the mission of this company. Being as the Plan includes an objective that reads "regulatory restrictions will be minimized to allow as much freedom as possible consistent with wilderness resource objective," I can see no reason why the services offered by such a company would ever be limited in the backcountry. If anything, they should be required. After a week of challenging physical labor, sublime vistas, and practice with the principles of LNTB I realized that the education and wisdom imparted by my guide had awoken a religious regard for wilderness within me. I now fully grasp the significance of wilderness conservation and furthermore the importance of services that facilitate such epiphanic experiences. Conservation and education- the two must be one and the same. Though the NPS is charged with administering both, the Service is clearly most suited to see to the duties of conserving/restoring ecosystems, limiting

populations, and enforcing law. Backpacking is the most potent means of educating the public of the importance of conservation; it is the most transformative experience and it has the least impact of all forms of backcountry travel. The NPS simply does not have the resources to provide a backpacking service to the public at the level of quality or scale needed to make a profound change in the way the public perceives the wilderness. The void must therefore be filled by professional services which abide by the same objectives as the NPS. Unlike other concessionaires and commercial entities in the Park, a private company offering wilderness as a product may never maximize profits by overloading any one destination because this would ultimately oversaturate and destroy their product. Backpacking companies may be the only example of a business model in sync with the goals of conservation and they may be key to educating the public of the importance of conserving our wild places. When I learned that their presence may become limited in the backcountry I was moved to comment. I hope that these words may resonate with those who would seek to limit the presence of backpacking companies in the Yosemite Wilderness. I have faith that after a century of experimentation the NPS will allow education to inform conservation to the extent that conservation informs education

Correspondence ID: 453 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 11:06:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that they have the impact of groups in mind when they limit the group size and other limits on guiding and education in parks.

Topic Question 2:

Impact seems to be a big issue and this should be addressed by ensuring that the people and companies have a valuable understanding of how to reduce the amount of impact that they have on the wilderness.

Comments: I work for Outward Bound California and I have seen first hand how the Yosemite Wilderness can be used to impact the lives of the up and coming younger generation of people who will be using the Wilderness. I know for sure that we teach correct wilderness ethics such as disposing of waste properly, reducing impact, and traveling off trail properly. I would love to be able to use the Yosemite Wilderness more to continue to impact lives and show the value of spending time outside to people who have never experienced it.

Correspondence ID: 454 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 11:10:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS currently provides opportunities for persons other than young, fit hikers to enjoy the wilderness. It does so by balancing the means to access the wilderness with its protection.

Topic Question 2:

Preserving the High Sierra Camps. They provide an opportunity for older people to explore the wilderness without having to carry heavy camping gear. The vast majority of people we encounter in the High Sierra Camps are over age 50. Without the Camps, a large portion of the population would not be able to enjoy the wilderness.

Comments: Do not eliminate the horse and pack animal access to the wilderness to supply the High Sierra Camps.

Correspondence ID: 455 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: For the past half a decade I have lived on the doorstep of the 8,000 acre Mohonk Preserve, the state's largest visitor and member supported nature preserve. It is also home to one of the nation's most iconic climbing cliffs, the "Gunks." I feel the Preserve exemplifies the balance between providing diverse guiding opportunities and regulating guiding operations.

As a climbing guide, I would be excited to see YNP open its doors to allow for more guiding opportunities. Climbing guests of Yosemite should be able to choose their preferred guide, rather than having only one option in the park. A variety of guide services, thus, options for guests, creates a positive competition and encourages a better product.

It is imperative that guiding in the park be governed by appropriate AMGA standards. Meaning, guides who choose to operate in Yosemite should do so within the appropriate terrain they are qualified to work in. Additionally, it is the responsibility of guides to be advocates of LNT practices so that their guests are not only appreciative of the incredible climbing opportunities within the park, but are encouraged to be stewards of the beautiful places in which they participate in such activities.

A diversified guiding population does not diminish the quality of the climbing experience in Yosemite, rather, it generates more stewards, and ensures a higher standard for the guiding industry of the park.

Regards,

TJ Ciotti

Correspondence ID: 456 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 11:38:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The wilderness in Yosemite National Park is currently being managed in a way that is in line with the Wilderness Act. It is also generally being managed in a way that is in compliance with what climbers need...mostly.

Topic Question 2:

I think that there is not enough commercial use for guided climbing in the Yosemite Wilderness. There is a proposal to add more use to the area.

Many places - like Mt. Rainier National Park and Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area - have programs that allow guides to apply for temporary permits. These are generally small ratio programs that have limited impact on the regular commercial operators, but still allow for some level of competition inside the areas. It would make a lot of sense if Yosemite did something similar. For example, maybe there could be a situation where a dozen guide services a year were granted 30 client user days each. In the scheme of things, this isn't very much.

You could monitor the quality of the guides by stating that only those who have achieved the AMGA Rock or Alpine Guide level of certification who have appropriate insurance, first aid training and leave no trace training could be allowed...

Comments: Modern guides are invested in the resource and want to keep wilderness wild. These professionals will do a great job of providing more access and safety to the guided public...

Correspondence ID: 457 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 11:46:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think human waste, trash, recycling, traffic, parking, and camping are all managed well by the NPS in Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

Human impacts, keep managing the herds.

Comments: I would like to see more guiding permits available for small guide services, working at small client-to-guide ratios, specifically for rock climbing.

Correspondence ID: 458 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 11:52:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The national park service manages the outdoor resource to allow for equal enjoyment by different types of visitors. Whether they are there to hike, photography, camp, with family, as part of a recreational group, climbers, boaters.

Topic Question 2:

Some of the most important issues are littering, keeping the park clean, and traffic.

Comments: As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Single Pitch instructor, AMGA Rock Instructor, AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 459 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 11:55:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

We value the work that the National Park Services offers lands and their efforts to conserve natural resources, educate visitors in the importance of keeping wild life healthy and undisturbed, and much more.

Topic Question 2:

The number of visitors keeps increasing, protected species, etc.

Comments: Our company is fully insured and permitted to run outdoor rock climbing courses and guided tours in Los Angeles area and Joshua Tree National Park. We would love to have the opportunity to offer our services in Yosemite National Park if permit applications are being accepted. RCED teaches and stresses "Leave No Trace" principles in all of the outdoor programs and would help increase awareness, if so was permitted to run commercial operations in the park.

Best Regards

Correspondence ID: 460 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think the NPS has upheld the integrity and the grandeur of the park system in its operations of Yosemite. I value the opportunities made available to the public to enjoy the wilderness in a variety of manners.

Topic Question 2:

One of the aspects that is important to me within the Yosemite Wilderness is the accessibility and opportunity made available to climbers, hikers, mountaineers, and other adventure seekers. Yosemite has always been THE premiere place to go to experience and enjoy adventure in the mountains. For many it is a dream to be able to ascend Yosemite granite to experience the views in an unparalleled manner.

Comments: As a climber myself, as well as a climbing team coach, instructor and mountain guide, I would like the ability to be able to expand the knowledge base of those that want to enjoy climbing in Yosemite.

Unfortunately, the current system is somewhat restrictive and does not provide a sufficiently diverse experience for those who want to use a guide or instructor.

Putting climbing and mountaineering in perspective by comparison to other activities and looking at the usage ratios would reveal that these activities are far from "capacity" and there is opportunity to allow for guided climbing activities.

Correspondence ID: 461 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Yosemite is a huge draw for millions of people, and it is a very difficult job to keep any park with high visitation a wilderness environment. Limiting permits on trails such as half dome has helped keep a wilderness feel for those venturing out.

Topic Question 2:

Fires the past few years have been threatening to the park and visitors, so I feel thinning the forest and the fire management plan is one of the most important issues facing Yosemite Wilderness. Fires were suppressed for so long that the amount of fuel on the valley floor could cause a catastrophic event. More controlled burning (like I witnessed October 2015) should continue to be a focus.

Comments: The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

Correspondence ID: 462 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 12:07:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

Topic Question 2:

1. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

2. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

3. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

4. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

5. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 463 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.27.2016 12:08:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate the balance between letting people into the incredible landscape and protecting the land in a way that aims at keeping it wild. I think both are important. I think it is important for people to go into wild and inspiring places but for the people to be changed by the place, rather than the people to change the place. I think there is growth that needs to happen in this area, but I do appreciate the steps that have been taken to see that both are happening.

Topic Question 2:

I see a rise in the value and appreciation for natural places and a place like Yosemite is an icon for natural places across the world. I think it is important for us to consider how people are to enjoy these kinds of places and to not overlook how the mode of their experience in a place will shape future generations of stewards. It is important people enjoy and see Yosemite and they have the opportunity to interact with it in a way that instills respect, understanding, fondness, and a bit of ownership. This doesn't happen from a car window or a brief hike to a waterfall for an epic selfie. This happens through an experience that reaches the entire person. This is a great opportunity for guiding to plan it's ultimate role of using nature and experience to shape people while ensuring the wonder of the place is left intact.

Comments: I think guiding can play a vital role in the public's interaction and interpretation of wilderness that hasn't been tapped yet. I see guiding as a resource for the National Parks. There is an industry of qualified mountain guides waiting to take people into the backcountry and onto the cliff for experiences that will change those participants. They will learn respect for a landscape, they'll learn LNT principals, they'll learn ecology, but not on purpose. It'll happen through an experience that defines part of who they are and what they think about themselves. Learning like that affects change in behavior where as education programs simple educate. I want to see the National Parks, Forests, and Wilderness areas understand the resource guiding is and begin to appreciate it for that.

Correspondence ID: 464 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.27.2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate that I can find solitude in Yosemite Wilderness. Yosemite National Park does an excellent job ensuring that this solitude remains. Although the Valley floor can be a madhouse, once I set foot off of the common trails I can still find untrammed landscapes that inspire my soul.

Topic Question 2:

I believe that the current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. I believe that modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Comments: I believe that the current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. I believe that modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 465 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.27.2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I don't. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. More could be done to provide the guided public with these opportunities.

Topic Question 2:

Preservation of the resource. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

Comments: Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 466 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.27.2016 12:16:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

As an American Mountain Guides Association certified guide I appreciate that Yosemite currently allowed guided climbing within the park... what I would appreciate more would be expanded opportunities for different guides and/or guide services to be allowed to guide in Yosemite. I believe that AMGA guides are an excellent steward of the park and provide a unique opportunity to share a wilderness experience with visitors with the many world class climbing opportunities that the park offers. I would like to see some type of Commercial Use Authorization system whereby sole proprietors or small guiding business could obtain permits to take visiting client to Yosemite instead of limiting guiding to a specific concessionaire.

Topic Question 2:

Most important is in keeping the current "wilderness" within the park in a pristine state in the "now" and for future generations to cherish and enjoy. I feel that AMGA certified guides can help the park by teaching clients about the wilderness with Leave No Trace principles and generally accepted best practices as shared by the American and international guiding communities. More guides operating within the park could mean greater access for visitors in a currently under-utilized system; increased safety with more opportunities to climb with a guide, resource stewardship and education about conservation and best practices, and a reduction of social impacts that some uneducated climbers currently have on the resource.

Comments: Thank you for your consideration of expanding guiding opportunities for Yosemite National Park. I appreciate the opportunity to express my views and support for the AMGA's plan for guiding in the Park. Please talk to AMGA representatives and give consideration for increased access for guides and their clients within the wilderness of Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 467 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 12:26:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The way the NPS maintains parking areas, pullouts, roadside bathrooms, established campgrounds, bear boxes all creates a more positive experience for visitors and helps relieve pressure on the Wilderness by creating places that can be enjoyed close to the roads. Management of the Wilderness proper comes off in a fashion that makes it feel less like Wilderness, and more like patrolled front country. I will cover these concerns with the next question.

Topic Question 2:

There are many issues to be concerned about regarding the Yosemite Wilderness today:

1. Half Dome, and specifically crowding and the NPS policy regarding the antiquated and downright hazardous cable route. A new plan needs to be implemented on Half Dome that includes the modernization of the cable route providing for two lanes of traffic (separate up and down lanes), as well as the recommendation for both guided hikes and use of via ferrata type harness/security systems to enable safe use of the cable route to visit the summit. The historic nature of the cable route, as well as the access of the summit to the public is much appreciated, however the route no longer meets the needs of the public both in amount of traffic and from a safety perspective. I have personally observed several close calls due to the antiquated system and the lack of safety equipment being used on the route. It is time for Yosemite National Park to address these issues directly from a modern perspective and create two lanes of traffic to modern via ferrata standards, and educate the public on proper safety equipment use and the benefit of hiring guides that can improve safety and educate the public on the benefits of the Wilderness and how to become stewards of the land.
2. The lack of no-reservation campgrounds in Yosemite valley has a detrimental impact on the use of the Wilderness by those wishing to visit the area. The current system requires planning far in advance to obtain a few days of camping within the valley. The current system and the lack of camping spaces increases daily vehicle traffic and diminishes the ability to visit the valley and use the Wilderness. I.e. more people are driving through then staying within the valley - limited camping pushes up the amount of commuting visitors and car traffic.
3. Lack of diversity in guided opportunities for visitors and the limited use of the Wilderness in Yosemite needs to be addressed. The current system provides for a limited amount of guided opportunities for the public and enables a monopoly for guided services. This is especially the case for guided climbing and limits the formal education possibilities that can be obtained through guided experiences. Having modern professional mountain guides operating in the Wilderness will help realize the formal educational public purpose of Wilderness areas - guides certified by associations such as the AMGA are invested, professional stewards of the land, and provide the highest level of education, stewardship, professionalism and safe Wilderness travel that can be obtained by the public. By diversifying the pool of climbing and mountain guides operating in the park, the public will benefit immensely by the higher level of education being provided.
4. Therefore, additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses with the proper credentials. These proprietors should be operating with the highest professional terrain-specific credentials and industry standard meeting insurance to obtain a CUA. Industry standards can be assessed by contacting the AMGA (American Mountain Guides Association) - the largest and most professional association of climbing guides in the USA. Terrain-specific credentials include the AMGA Rock Guide Certification, the AMGA Alpine Guide Certification, the AMGA Ski Guide Certification and the IFMGA Mountain Guide Certification (includes all three disciplines of Wilderness guiding) provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, provide resource stewardship and interpretation, and reduction of social impacts. Organizations, such as the Certified Guides Cooperative, ensure that their guides operate within the level of their terrain-specific credentials and provide industry standard setting levels of insurance to their guides. Allowing these organizations to participate in providing guided Wilderness experiences will allow for more diverse experiences by visitors in the Wilderness and provide for greater education of these visitors.

Comments: I sincerely hope a thoughtful look is given to how Yosemite National Park can improve visitor Wilderness experiences can improved by providing better education and a safer experience on the Half Dome cable route that represents an industry standard of travel, by providing better access to camping in Yosemite Valley, by supporting an increase in guided Wilderness experiences by trained professionals, and an increase of diversity of organizations providing these experiences. These ideas alone can propel YNP into the next 50 years with more positive Wilderness experiences to be had by all.

Correspondence ID: 468 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate the supervision and care given to one of the great wonders of the world. Preservation being a top item. The NPS does a generally great job as does the NPCA.

Topic Question 2:

Overcrowding and over commercialization of the Valley Floor and infrastructure.

Comments: I am a director and I shot and directed Star Trek V on the flanks of El Capitan. I have also climbed it three times: Triple Direct, Salathe Wall and East Buttress. I love the valley and camp four. I have spend many springs in Camp Four throughout my 50 year climbing career.

I'm also a member of the AMGA and the Sierra Club.

I would like to see the proper vetting of guiding agencies in Yosemite including licensed, insured and certified AMGA guides and their companies. There is no crowding on many of the routes in the Valley and I think it should be open to more parties who would like to be safely and thoughtfully guided up the many routes that are available. ie:

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 469 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.27,2016 12:30:42

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Incredible opportunities for exploration from easy paved trails to rugged untrammelled wilderness. Minimization of impact on high-travel areas through permit systems, shuttle service, and other measures.

Topic Question 2:

How to keep the wilderness available to all while minimizing impact due to large numbers of visitors.

Comments: As a rock climbing guide and instructor, in addition to a user of the wilderness for personal reasons, I would like to see there be opportunities for independent guides and instructors to operate in the Yosemite Wilderness. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who choose to access Yosemite Wilderness with a guide. Guides with demonstrated experience and training can enhance safety and teach visitors how to minimize their impact on the land. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. Certifications such as AMGA could be used as a requirement for obtaining permits or a way to streamline the process. Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 470 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.27,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Please see comments below regarding qualification-based guiding concessions in YNP

Topic Question 2:

Please see below

Comments: Please consider the support of further commercial guiding in Yosemite National Park. My comments are as follows:

1. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.
 2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.
 3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.
 4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.
 5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.
 6. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).
-

Correspondence ID: 471 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 12:39:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Stewardship. The National Park Service does a great job taking care of this incredible and fragile natural treasure.

Topic Question 2:
Access and long-term care

Comments: I would like to support the Park Service in opening access to certified guides so that the public can access the wonderful experience of climbing in Yosemite. AMGA guides protect the environment while bringing people to places that they could not access on their own. Importantly, guides make sure that clients leave no trace while they are in the wilderness.

Rock climbing today is not near capacity in Yosemite. Low-ratio CUAs are a great way to manage access and expand mountaineering capacity in the valley.

As capacity is expanded in the valley, I believe that it is critical for guides to be involved. As mentioned above, certified guides will educate the public and deliver incredible experiences for their clients.

Thanks you

Correspondence ID: 472 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The dedication to protecting a wonderful resource.

Topic Question 2:
There is a significant lack of opportunity for high quality experienced climbing guides and instructors to share Yosemite Wilderness areas with the public.

Comments: Open up the closed system and allow well considered special use permits that will facilitate visitors who wish to to utilize their personal choice of highly trained climbing guides and instructors. End the monopoly on who can conduct climbing operations in the park so that more of the public can enjoy the most historic climbing area in the United States with guide services who have put the commitment into gaining accreditation from the American Mountain Guides Association which is the only US organization internationally recognized as meeting industry standards for the profession.

Correspondence ID: 473 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 12:50:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
It is important to me that the vast majority of Yosemite's land area remains untouched by permanent anthropogenic impacts. This seems to be mostly successful so far.

Topic Question 2:
Recreational use and climate change are the most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness. Climate change needs to be addressed on a global scale, with locally implemented carbon-reduction measures. In Yosemite, to address climate change along with a whole host of other issues plaguing the park's wilderness and non-wilderness, a comprehensive parking and transportation plan overhaul is necessary. The park needs a parking and shuttle plan (and associated infrastructure) that allows convenient and timely tourist and guest mobility along the Park's roads while dramatically reducing pollution locally and globally, as well as reducing in-park congestion. In terms of wilderness recreational use, a few things need to change to reflect modern recreational usage while maintaining and further enhancing the wilderness character of Yosemite's wild spaces. The impacts of use on wildlife, geology, and other's experience needs to be mitigated with sound, non-obtrusive management. The two biggest things that I believe will enhance most users experience while also further minimizing anthropogenic impact are to further limit stock use in the wilderness and empower greater human-powered commercial guiding in the wilderness. As a full-time, professionally certified mountain guide, familiar with climbing in Yosemite and guiding in the remainder of the Sierra Nevada, this latter-most point is where I am best qualified to comment. The current model, in which one concessionaire is allowed commercial guiding access to technical terrain as well as trails and non-technical off trail terrain, with limited, temporary commercial permits for guided, non-technical endeavors, fails to adequately protect the wilderness and suppresses American free enterprise. Additional, carefully administered business permits for commercial rock and alpine climbing guiding will enhance wilderness preservation and users experience. Commercial mountain guides, trained and certified in their craft, share the resource with the public in a way that is sustainable, low-impact, and arguably more dispersed than non-commercial use. Yosemite's rock climbing is well-used, especially by those new to the sport. Commercial guides, operating with due respect to their peers, can empower climbers to visit parts of the park that are less well used and to do so in a fashion that is lighter on the land. Additionally, guided climbing is safer and more efficient for the park guest than that same guest going and trying to figure it out on his or her own. Effective administration of additional commercial guiding access will start with a permit process that emphasizes the training and certification of the eventual guides. Guides certified to an international standard, such as that of the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (a certification process overseen in the US by the American Mountain Guides Association), are best prepared to administer excellent trips on which impact is minimized, guest wilderness appreciation is maximized, and user safety is a high priority. Empowering certified guides simplifies the management process for the park by delegating the vetting of guide skills and experience to the guide community and certifying body. Additional permit management in terms of simple terrain divisions among guides will mitigate any sort of additional crowding concerns. For example, The existing concessionaire and one or two permit holders could be granted exclusive commercial access to the most popular beginner climbing areas while access to the bigger, harder climbing routes and areas is granted to a larger cadre of guides or guide services.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 474 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,27,2016 12:54:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate the opportunity to periodically review current policies and adjust them. This is crucial.
I appreciate that the resource exists in a largely undiminished state for future use.

Topic Question 2:

Commercial use is a huge issue. I would like to see greater access opportunities for trained and credentialed individuals to access wilderness in YNP. The Park is not at capacity, and guests don't have equal access to climbing because of current policies and concessions that limit use of the resource to a select few.

Comments: The way the commercial use opportunities are currently set up does not allow for Independent certified guides to work or share the park with guests. The concession structure denies access and opportunities for a broad spectrum of the public that would otherwise choose to be guided, educated, and more broadly exposed to the unique resources the park offers climbers mountaineers hikers.

I am an instructor team member for the America Mountain Guides Association and I know professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA. We as guides and guide educators could offer a broader and richer experience to students and clients if the park's wilderness areas were more open to responsible commercial use.

Rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in most of Yosemite's wilderness, I would like the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

It seems reasonable that additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) for sole proprietors and small businesses.

Who is granted permits to guide and for other commercial uses is crucial. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 475 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It is preserving the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Access should be granted to certified, professional mountain guides.

Comments: I am an American currently living in Switzerland. I make 100% of my income from guiding. This is unusual in the US because of the past and current system. But there now exists a system of certifying guides nationally, recognized internationally, through the AMGA. After completing this rigorous 3 year program, these certified guides carry an important role in the wilderness: they are professional leaders, able to assess the dangers involved in mountaineering and rock climbing. They are a huge asset to our National Parks and should be used by the park services as valuable partners. After living here in Switzerland and working as a guide, I see how much I offer to clients and the general public I come in contact with.

In my opinion, it would do the Park a great service to work closely with professional mountain guides in the future.

Correspondence ID: 476 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I don't value the system. The system is an undemocratic concession system based on cronyism. It's impossible for new companies or others to participate in the guiding system.

Comments: Please allow fair and open access to many guide services big and small within the park. This is an American right. The right to practice one's profession within a legal framework. Mountain Guides should be allowed to individually practice their profession without needing to be hired by a large business or concession in order to practice their profession. Any doctor, or other professional can practice their profession if they follow the law and guideline set by their industry. Please open public lands and give working professionals the same legal rights and the illegal monopoly established for a select few.

Correspondence ID: 477 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value how the NPS puts a priority on preservation, wilderness and upholding the Wilderness Act of 1964. Regulation is not a bad thing but access should not be limited to historical precedent- it should be based on current credentials. I strongly believe that credential based access to the Wilderness should be in the future of the park. All commercial users should be LNT certified, and have appropriate training and certification for any terrain where they take paying guests. I would go as far as saying that even educational institutions should be held to the same level as commercial operations.

Topic Question 2:

Overuse and crowding of popular hiking trails and climbing routes by both commercial and recreational users. Allowing commercial use in additional areas would disperse crowds and offer better experiences for all guests to the park.

Traffic is another major issue. Perhaps there could way to offer more bike rental options and reward those visitors who use off-site parking.

Comments: I am an AMGA certified Rock and Ski Guide based in Leadville, CO. I care deeply about the fate of Yosemite National Park not because I stand to personally gain from access for more guides and outfitters. I care because I believe in credential based access for certified professionals everywhere. I will most likely never work in Yosemite, but I stand with my fellow climbing professionals when I ask that we should be allowed to practice our craft in Yosemite.

To work in a National Park is a privilege as the National Parks are our country's great treasures. It is not wrong to want to make a living working on public land and there is already a host of concessions that do so. They provide much-wanted resources to the general public when they come on holiday.

The real question is then, "who gets to provide those services." When it comes to rock guiding in Yosemite I believe that the industry's certified professionals should be included in the discussion. In the rock climbing arena, the American Mountain Guides Association trains and certifies rock climbing guides at the international standard. An individual who attains this certification is called and AMGA Rock Guide.

I am asking that a system be put in place where qualified professionals can apply for a CUA to bring their guests to Yosemite National Park. AMGA Rock Guides are trained in LNT, rescue, and risk-management; they can provide low-impact highly rewarding experiences in a low-ratio setting for paying guests. I am not asking that other guide services be terminated or expelled from the park. I am only asking that a permitting system be set up where other qualified professionals can bring their guests to climb at the world's greatest climbing destination.

Correspondence ID: 478 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.27,2016 13:54:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

1. I like that overnight backcountry users must have a permit.
2. I like that big wall climbers must pack out their waste.
3. It seems that the Park Service is attempting to address the traffic problem in the Valley.

Topic Question 2:

1. Guiding Monopoly. The Yosemite climbing areas have been monopolized by one guide service for a long time. This is limiting in many ways. It allows only a single business corporation to dictate how the guiding is run, how much it pays, and which guides can guide in the Park. Many guides around the US would like to have access to guide in the Park, but cannot due to YMS's hiring practices. I mostly work in Rocky Mountain National Park, and we just opened the permits to six from one - unfortunately, I think the Park made some poor decisions on who to give those permits to, but regardless, I think it is a fair and reasonable business practice to allow more concessionaires. Grand Teton NP and Joshua Tree NP did this long ago. Mt. Rainier NP did this 8 years ago or so. It is time for Yosemite NP to catch up. If the concession opens to new permit holders, small businesses should not be excluded from the opportunity to have a permit.

2. Certified Guides. The industry in the US is finally catching up to the rest of the developed world and beginning to see the importance and utility of limiting guides to working in terrain they are actually trained and certified for. Many of us are spending \$10-40,000 on course and exam tuitions (and a lot more on the travel and living expenses involved) to be trained and assessed at the highest international levels of guiding - meanwhile, guide services and land managers are still willing to allow untrained and barely trained "guides" to work in complex and hazardous terrain. If the same thing were happening in mental health, it would look like anyone who's been a therapy client or watched Jack Nicholson and Adam Sandler in "Anger Management" could hang a shingle and call themselves a psychotherapist. Same with building contractors, lawyers, doctors, etc. Climbing guides are keeping clients safe on a daily basis and of all the previously mentioned professions, guides and medical health practitioners should be the most regulated - as there are very small margins for error.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 479 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.27,2016 14:13:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Not much

Topic Question 2:

Stop the police state mentality. Visitors aren't criminals so stop being cops first and hosts a distant second. The parks are uninviting to anyone who wants to recreate, it is set-up for the driving tourist and backcountry users are criminalized, registered and untrusted. The bureaucracy to access the wilderness completely destroys the experience. Drive all you want but you must register to walk and sleep on the ground. Your policies are the problem not the backcountry user.

Comments: You will be looking at mountain guiding in the park. In the past you permitted 1 large guide service as part of your concession permit. Your reliance on the corporate ethics to choose good guides completely dismisses the reality of what a soulless corporation is meant to do, maximize profits. So you regulate their prices which then creates the dynamic of low paid guides that then attracts untrained self described guides. Despite that there are many of us that for 30 years have built an internationally recognized credential you refuse to acknowledge. You are so enamored by the corporate overlords that you ignore a serious move by citizens to solve a problem in this country. You as land managers are in complete control of the outdoor recreation economy and you refuse to recognize mountain guiding as a profession and force us to be the indentured servants of a licensed corporation. Take a few economy classes instead of being cops running a police state and you might see the folly of your policies.

So I may sound insulting, good, you insult me and my profession daily and it is time to stop. Let me leave it at this, you ignore the international standard

for guiding at your peril. Give access to untrained guides at the expense of those who have been trained and vetted at a high standard and someday you will have to answer to the citizens you serve for your obstinance. I will continue to work the rest of my life to see to it.

Marc Chauvin
IFMGA Mountain Guide

Correspondence ID: 480 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.27,2016 14:14:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Increased use of permit system to control overuse of popular areas of the backcountry

Topic Question 2:

Ever increasing population and popularity of Yosemite. Educating backcountry users on 1) Leave No Trace ethics and 2) the large diversity of lesser used areas of the park.

Comments: I have lived in Southern California since 1962 and for most of my adult life I have made multiple trips to Yosemite's backcountry each year. I have spent time there in every season (I just returned from 3 days of snowshoeing out of Badger Pass-as it will always be known to me).

I also spend time every year using guide services to facilitate trips into remote locations in the Sierras, Cascades and Tetons, among other mountain ranges. I have used guide services such as RMI, AAI, TMG, SWS, JHMG and others. Additionally, I have climbed with Yosemite Mountaineering school.

Although my experience with Yosemite Mountaineering school was excellent, by limiting my choice of guide services into the Yosemite backcountry, I find that guiding is restricted to the most popular wilderness destinations without the competition that would force guide services to be more creative in promoting lesser known regions of the park.

Smaller companies such as TMG and SWS in particular are good at making each guiding trip an outdoor classroom in LNT wilderness ethics. They are also more likely to customize trips and suggest wilderness areas that receive less visitation as well as to promote trips on shoulder seasons and on weekdays.

By allowing more professional, certified guides access to the Yosemite backcountry, I believe that you will also create a safer backcountry environment by limiting "freelance guiding" by unqualified individuals posing as highly trained guiding specialists. Certified guides in the backcountry also act as unpaid rangers for the park service by reporting environmental conditions and suspicious activities in regions of the park that are not frequented by NPS rangers. In my dozens of times climbing with professional guides, I have found that they not only are concerned with their clients safety and well-being, but are always vigilante about ensuring that other wilderness users are using safe and environmentally sound LNT practices.

Professional guide services can also act as a permitting system by controlling days which clients can access some of the more popular climbing locations in the park.

As an aging outdoorsman, I still love adventure and I still love the Yosemite backcountry. By making professional guide services more available and more diverse within YNP, you are allowing access to more individuals like me. I don't want to stand in line to climb the cables at Half Dome one more time. I don't want to spend another night at a High Sierra Camp until I cannot carry a 50 pound pack into the backcountry and climb a 5.7 multi-pitch route.

Thank you for your consideration,

Correspondence ID: 481 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.27,2016 14:27:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Preservation aspects alone.

Topic Question 2:

Commercial guiding should be permitted by more than just the Yosemite Mountaineering School. Qualified AMGA Guides from all over the US should have an opportunity to take their clients to Yosemite for classic ascents. The current model does not allow for qualified and certified guides to have freedom to operate within their trade. Clients and park goers should have the freedom to choose who they want to do their climbs with.

Comments: Allow AMGA Certified guides to work within the park!

Correspondence ID: 482 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.27,2016 14:32:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The NPS handles the large numbers of people who visit Yosemite well. Given the lack of resources, I am impressed by how well things work. Staff are generally highly dedicated individuals who deeply value Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

Damage to the environment by pack animals. The NPS lectures hikers and backpackers about the fragility of meadows, but when those traveling by foot reach meadows they frequently find them trashed by pack animals that have defecated over every square meter, eaten the flora, and trampled stream embankments. This contradiction has not gone unnoticed! Furthermore the NPS makes a big deal about giardia contamination. This is a red herring designed to distract attention from the real problem: Contamination of waters by stock animals. At the very least the NPS should be honest about the harm caused by pack animals even if it is powerless to stop them.

Comments: Please respect the letter and intent of the law by minimizing impacts to the Yosemite wilderness. No motor vehicles, helicopters, planes, buildings, etc. should be permitted unless a life is in immediate danger.

Correspondence ID: 483 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I don't value the American concession system. The system is an undemocratic concession system based on cronyism. It's impossible for new companies or others to fairly participate in the guiding system.

Comments: Please allow fair an open access to all guide services big and small within the park. This is an American right. The right to practice ones profession within a legal framework. Mountain Guides should be allowed to individually practice their profession without needing to be hired by a large business or concession in order to practice their profession. Any doctor, or other professional can practice their profession if they follow the laws and legal guidelines set by their industry. Please open public lands and give working professionals the same legal rights and end the illegal monopoly established for a select few. The park says they do this in order to protect wildlife and public lands. But they are closed minded and closed to new ideas of inclusiveness by their lack of motivation to create a fair and open system.

Correspondence ID: 484 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 14:38:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am grateful for the opportunity to camp with my horses in Yosemite and explore the backcountry. I have been camping annually with my family and friends for many years, and it is always the highlight of my year. I appreciate that the maintenance of trails is done well and with minimal environmental impact (for example the use of mules to carry in supplies rather than motorized vehicles or helicopters). I am very pleased to see the wilderness maintained in a primitive state, in accordance with the Keeping It Wild philosophy. But I do hope that stock use will continue to be allowed, with minimal restrictions as is currently the case, since stock have been integral to the historical development of the park and continue to provide access to remote areas to individuals who may not otherwise be able to experience the awesome splendor of the Yosemite Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand the conflicting goals of providing access to the Wilderness and protecting it from overuse. I hope that the new plan will continue to provide modest facilities in the more heavily traveled areas, yet keep the Wilderness wild and free. I hope that the plan will continue to allow access to hikers, backpackers and users of stock. There are ways to encourage these groups to enjoy the wilderness in cooperation rather than conflict. I exhort the NPS to base the plan on scientifically valid data and information rather than on anecdotal statements from a disgruntled minority. I very much hope that private horsemen such as myself will have access to the wilderness; experiencing the wilderness only through a concessionaire-led stock trip is not at all the same.

Comments: Thank you for allowing this opportunity to provide comments on the Wilderness Plan.

Correspondence ID: 485 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Emphasis on holistic use of the space including education of bear safety and leave no trace. Access to wilderness areas by the self guided public. Discounts provided for veteran and senior citizen entry. Rescue services on call.

Topic Question 2:

Continuing to educate the public on appropriate use of the wilderness for future generations. Managing the impact of the growing interests in wilderness exposure.

Comments: Per question two I believe expanding opportunities for guided use of Yosemite national parks will support the parks mission to educate users and support a culture of stewardship and thoughtfulness. Beginning with Leave No Trace principles but moving beyond into an ever deepening appreciation for wilderness areas and the benefits they bring us all.

Correspondence ID: 486 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the commitment to preservation of the environment including plant, animal species while allowing access for recreation with considerations of minimal impact.

Topic Question 2:

There is an ever increasing desire to enjoy and experience Yosemite now more than ever. Managing the increased in demand for access requires modifying the past and current strategies for environmental and safety concerns. Rather than limit the areas of access, which is a purely restrictive approach for everyone. This can be addressed by limiting access to those who have

Comments: I have been a guide professional since 1989. My work over the last 20 years has brought many clients to appreciate and experience many great places in private, state and federal lands throughout the western states. As an AMGA Certified professional and career guide, I am committed to the highest level of safety and minimal environmental impact practices as the local areas require and deserve. We share this with every client, passing on best practices and instill preservation and environmental stewardship that they can apply everywhere they climb. As you are looking at how to deal with increased use, consider maintaining limited users but broaden the access to individual guides and small bussneses that align with the goals and regulations of the federal land management. Opening access to the conscientious guide professional will help ensure that safety/liability concerns and environmental impact are in practice and shared to all future recreational climbers in Yosemite and all national parks. I would like to have the opportunity to share Yosemite with my

clients and be a part of a more inclusive management structure in Yosemite National park.

Here are some important points and considerations that have been shared by many guide professionals that help support my above thoughts and opinions:

1. The current system needs more diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.
2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.
3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.
4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.
5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.
6. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 487 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 15:20:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:
Accessibility to climbing areas of the park with an AMGA certified Guide

Comments: 1. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.
3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.
4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.
5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.
6. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 488 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 15:32:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think that NPS does a phenomenal job protecting the wilderness from overuse and allowing individuals the opportunity to explore the backcountry. However, I would love to see an expansion of guiding opportunities - there are so many people who self-select out of wilderness experiences because they are afraid of not having enough skills and knowledge to do so safely. If they wanted to hire a guide to lead them and go out safely I believe the Park Service should encourage this by offering greater opportunities for guided trips, specifically trips that involve technical skills.

Topic Question 2:

It will always be an uphill battle to educate people as to how we can best protect and preserve the land. Encouraging the use of guiding companies that have proven to have strong land ethics and instill these ethics in their participants is one of the best ways to get the word out.

Comments: With so much rock and under-utilized areas in Yosemite it would be wonderful to see the Park Service reconsider opening up guiding opportunities to companies that have proven to maintain adherence to permitting regulations, modeled strong land care ethics, teach participants/guests why land care and LNT is so important and hold guides to the highest training standards. It seems unfair and, arguably, borderline illegal that one company should be able to monopolize all the climbing areas. Certainly, I recognize that climbing involves risk and therefore there needs to be high standards for climbing guides in the park but by partnering with guiding companies and organizations such as the AMGA it seems obvious to me that the Park Service could create ways to open up access and ensure safety. Guides, give back to the park through education of their clients and participation in things like FaceLift - since many of us already participate in this.

Correspondence ID: 489 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have not been to Yosemite, So I can not say. However it's reputation is legendary. I live 30 minutes from The Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve. I often guide inside GSDNP.

Topic Question 2:

Again, I can not speak directly to Yosemite, however I can speak to other wilderness areas. Access and qualified guides. As a member of my local SAR, I see to many people heading into wilderness areas unprepared. Allowing qualified guides access will help with stewardship of wilderness areas. After all, any guide worth his/her salt is a teacher as well.

Comments: As the 'king' of the National Parks, many of the others will follow your decisions. Please open Guiding to the wilderness areas. Guides are teachers, and stewards of the land that they guide on. The American Mountain Guides Association is the top association of guides in the USA. I recommend giving AMGA guides exclusive access. The AMGA is the only IFMGA certified body in the USA. Yes, I am a member and have a low level of certification from the AMGA.

Correspondence ID: 490 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 15:39:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

There seems to be a push among many National Parks to charge by day per person for wilderness use. It seems like Yosemite does not do that (it has been a number of years since I have done a trip into the Yosemite Wilderness) and I think that is great. I believe that charging per day per person for a wilderness fee is contrary to everything that the NPS does and should exist for. Enjoying public lands should be a right for all citizens, not based upon someones ability to pay a fee or not.

Topic Question 2:

One issue that I feel strongly about is commercial guiding. I believe that there is a place and a need for commercial guiding in wilderness. My big objection is the dominance of large outfitters and guide services park service wide in the guiding arena. The burden and necessity to generate large amounts of paperwork to feed the bureaucracy is a huge limiting factor in the ability of qualified independent guides and small operations to be able to compete. Why should a government agency tell me as a citizen, taxpayer, and part owner of our national lands that I cannot also work professionally on those same lands if I have the necessary experience and qualifications? It is unfortunate that much of our government today is dominated by corporate and big business money, that our entire democracy is in danger of being coopted by it, and I believe that this is also true in commercial guiding. How about creating a framework to allow a certain percentage of guiding going to small independent owner-operators, and also streamlining the amount of paperwork generated so there are enough hours in the day for an owner-operator to both work as well as jumping though all the hoops necessary for pursuing permits?

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 491 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 16:11:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have not been to Yosemite since I was a child (late 1960s), but it is on my bucket list for National Park visits. We are planning to come in the fall of 2017 to hike, climb, and perhaps camp.

Topic Question 2:

I understand crowding is a problem in summer. I would never choose to come to Yosemite in the summer unless I was going to be going into the backcountry with an AMGA certified guide.

Comments: The past three summers we have hiked and climbed in Grand Teton National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, and several areas in NY and NC, as we have been learning to become comfortable in the backcountry at a relatively late age (50s). Using AMGA certified guides has immeasurably enhanced our experiences in the wild areas. Our guides have come from guide services like Exum (WY), Colorado Mountain School, Fox Mountain Guides (NC), Alpine Endeavors (NY), Granite Arches (NC), and Utah Mountain Adventures. Yes, we have gone overboard for backcountry adventure, but we would never be able to do it without the help and guidance of these companies and the excellent guides they work with.

We have learned a great new appreciation for the wilderness with these guides, hiking deep into Garnet Canyon with Gary Falk, ascending the Loft Couloir with Eli Helmuth, ski touring the aprons of the Twin Peaks in the Wasatch with Allen Rousseau, and exploring deep into NC with Ron Funderburke and Scott Perkins.

Ron ignited our interest in rock climbing with his half-day introduction to climbing Looking Glass Rock in the Pisgah National Forest near Brevard, NC. We met with him two more times to learn both ice climbing (Whitesides Mountain) and big wall climbing (Laurel Knob). He has been instrumental in bringing us the guidance, information, and leadership we have needed to progress as backcountry adventurers. Growing up in NC from 1972 to 1982, I was able to ski there, enjoy lakes and mountains and beaches, but I was never such a part of nature's majesty as when Scott and Ron guided us in NC in 2014 and 2015. These successes relatively close to home have gotten us to branch out to adventure in WY, UT, and CO. It has been life-changing for us. Tourists who park in the large parking lots and wander to the overlooks and read the park signage are all enjoying the wilderness, too, and I was one of these people for my whole life. Only now I am aware of the value of guided adventure.

Getting permits for Red Rocks near Las Vegas was a huge challenge this year. We began planning way in advance, and were barely able to get a few days with our preferred guide there (Jes Meiris). She was able to get permits through her employer, Exum Mountain Guides, but it was excruciatingly difficult.

We are hoping to climb in Yosemite next year, and we would like you to know that after several years of guided adventure, there is no other way we would rather experience the wilderness and beauty of Yosemite, and all the National Parks.

Correspondence ID: 492 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 16:36:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

While I accept that careful management is necessary to mitigate the impact of visitors to Yosemite, opening up more opportunities for guided climbing is unlikely to increase negative impacts on wilderness areas.

Yosemite is not intended to be a pristine time capsule. Rather, it should be managed to allow visitors see interact with the wilderness so that they can learn

about and recognize its value. This is the best way to ensure support for the safekeeping of all wilderness areas - we won't have the will to protect what we don't see and understand.

If you can open Yosemite to more people in a safe and low-impact way, then do it.

Properly qualified guides (AMGA, ACMG and IFMGA certified) are much more likely to conduct their activities in Yosemite in keeping with best low impact practices. I have been in countless guided trips in 8 different countries and on 5 continents. In my experience, qualified guides and their clients almost always observe leave no trace rules, and conduct themselves in a safe manner.

Topic Question 2:

We need to encourage a new generation of people to develop a relationship with the wilderness. The best way for them to do that, when they have not been raised with any familiarity with the wilderness, is to open the wilderness to qualified guides.

These decisions should not be based on protecting the concessions of any particular commercial operator.

Comments:

Correspondence ID:	493	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan.27.2016 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Topic Question 1:				
	Their ability to get everyone involved in the process.				

Topic Question 2:

Servicing the increase demand and thirst for an outdoor/wilderness experience by the general public. More and more people are coming, more and more people need the outdoors in their lives.

Comments: Scoping for Yosemite Wilderness Management Plan

First of all I would like to applaud everyone in this process. Not only do I enjoy seeing our government and Park Service at work, I enjoy being part of the process.

This isn't the first time I have publicly commented on the "extent necessary determination" of commercial outfitted use in the wilderness and I hope I can be advocate for everyone as long as I live. I am the co-founder and President of Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides based locally in Oakhurst, Ca. I have devoted my entire adult life to being an outfitter guide. SYMG has shown thousands and thousands of people the beauty of not just the Yosemite wilderness but also the wilderness areas of the entire Sierra Nevada, for over 25 years. I can honestly say, unequivocally, that there is not only a demand, but also a true need for commercial services in the wilderness. There are two major mis-conceptions about guides and guided trips I have consistently heard over the years (from both the general public and even government officials at times), both of which aren't true. The first is that the general public hires guides to get around the permitting system and the 2nd one is that the guides bring in too many people and have a negative impact on the resource.

To the first common misconception:

People don't hire guides to get around the permit system, they hire guides because they have often have no idea how to go about planning and executing a safe and rewarding experience in the wilderness, (especially in Yosemite where permits need a 24 week in advance notice and surrounding logistics often need to be booked 1 year in advance). In fact, many of the people we take out have never been in the wilderness backcountry and they wouldn't think of going into the wilderness on their own. To this we say, "good idea!" If someone doesn't know how to go about traveling in the wilderness, and wants to hire a professional, this is just plain smart. If you take away this choice for people to hire professionals, this will lead to either: people can't go out into their own lands or they will still go and won't be prepared, ultimately leading to other catastrophic events.

I had a client once, who hiked all over the Sierra with me over many years and we often had great conversations around the campfire, (and as we all know as wilderness lovers, these are the most memorable conversations a lifetime has to offer). The topic of guiding in the wilderness came up on more than one occasion, and he would laugh and say: "well, I can do my taxes by myself I suppose but it's complicated and the risk of making a mistake can have grave consequences, so I hire a professional accountant to do it!" To which I followed with: "you have the right to represent yourself in a court of law, but when push comes to shove you may be better off hiring an attorney..." We went on like this for a few more but the take away is obvious and the analogy is clear. Are guides necessary for some people to enjoy their own wilderness lands? The answer is clearly yes for some.

And this was years ago! Fast forward to the current modern age, an age where more and more people need the wilderness and a truly un-plugged experience. This equation intensifies. People need the ability to hire a professional guide more than ever. As guides we supply the infrastructure to be able to turn someone's dream, or idea of adventure into a reality. Yes, we supply the permits, but we supply so much more. We supply planning, proper and safe equipment, and fully enrich the user experience with knowledge about the areas we are traveling through. We teach people about respecting our wilderness; we enforce Leave No Trace ethics and make sure people get in and out of the wilderness safely. It isn't just a "want" in most cases; it is a "need." Guides are passionate stewards of the wilderness and this rubs off on our clients. It's a win-win-win: Park Service (and the actual wilderness lands), the clients from all over the US and abroad who wouldn't get a chance to see the wilderness and our Outfitter Guide business which brings in a lot of revenue for the community with hotel stays, transportation uses, our 20 employees, etc. We are all doing our jobs and everyone wins. No losers here. Contrarily, if you take away the ability for the guides to work commercially on the federal wilderness lands of Yosemite, everyone in this scenario loses. Much of the public won't be able to go and visit the backcountry, the Park Service will still have the same use on the lands they manage but the use will be filled with more people who pose a danger to themselves and to the public employees, as well as the sensitive lands that they travel in without the proper education of the guides.

As to common misconception #2:

Yes, guides bring people into the wilderness but we argue that the people we bring into the wilderness will be educated on having an appreciation and understanding of how important preserving the wilderness for future generations truly is. If the new wilderness management plan doesn't allow for guides to be available commercially, we'd be alienating and essentially discriminating against people who didn't feel comfortable going into the wilderness on their own. I argue that by having guides bring people in versus the non-guided public coming in with out guides the character of the wilderness may

actually be better. However, I do not see the need to make it mandatory for people to come with guides but rather at a minimum have a choice to.

Remember, there are already many quotas in place, based on environmental impact studies in most of the wilderness areas of the Sierra, Yosemite included. They're only a certain amount of people permitted to leave each day from the trailheads. However, we may need to re think this and let a few more people come. Maybe we add more trailheads that access different areas or regulate where people camp a bit more strictly to reduce "wear and tear." There are ways and we as guides are here to help in our partnership and stewardship of the wilderness. The people are coming (as is their right to see their own National Parks) so, do we cut the guides out completely and have all the quotas filled with people who may or not be appropriate candidates to visit the wilderness? I say no. In fact I would say we need 2 quotas, as they have on some of the Forest Service lands we operate in around the border of Yosemite. This is an intelligent way to separate the use: one quota to go on your own, one quota to go with a guide. Give people a choice. This would eliminate the mis and over use of the wilderness and be a wonderful compromise to the over demand and under supply of the resource. Yes, you are adding more use by adding an outfitter guide wilderness permit quota but you are adding responsible use. This new responsible use I advocate can also take pressure off the main corridors and traditional high-use areas. The general public will follow the popular spots and popular routes and add to the "over-use problem," but the guides will be creative with their knowledge of the terrain and design itineraries that draw people away from the high use areas, when they can. In fact we have made a career on this exact concept for 26 years now. The guided public wants to get away from the crowded areas but doesn't know where to go, that is one of the reasons they hire guides in the first place.

To address some of the specifics of the new plan besides the above of determining the "need," here are some recommendations from our side of the table:

1. How many and what determines which outfitters can lead trips commercially?

We recommend that the Park Service stick to the outfitters with current permits who have showed and proved they guide professionally and add value to the Park visitor's experience. We feel that locally -based outfitters, with their proximity and commitment to the surrounding local communities, should receive priority over the outfitters who come from other states and areas of the Sierra and only use the Park as a side note offering to their other destinations. We feel that a longer-term priority permit 5 or 10 years would drastically help all the businesses that surround the guiding industry with ability to offer more stability to the booking and arrangement process. We also feel that an outfitter guide quota for wilderness permits would greatly enhance the visitor's end-use.

2. Rock Climbing Guiding

The timing is now for a determination of whether the monopoly on the YMS permit as the sole entity for rock climbing is still appropriate and serves the general public as it should be doing. Between the new wilderness management plan and the new concessionaire, this topic should be addressed now with transparency and fluidity. Personally and professionally, I believe that there is room for a few additional Rock Climbing Schools to be allowed to guide on the rocks in Yosemite. There is plenty of resource. Again, appropriate credentials and certifications to keep the high standards of safety up are encouraged. There are two main governing bodies currently who are already accepted at National Parks and I would be in favor of using these certifications in my hiring so that my employees could guide rock climbing inside Yosemite. Certifications from the AMGA and PCGI are currently what we require for rock guiding on our Sierra National Forest permits along the Park boundary and this works well for example.

3. Stock use.

We are big proponents for responsible stock-use in wilderness areas, Yosemite included. I have re-printed a letter I wrote during the court case that was brought onto SEKI NP in 2012 by the High Sierra Hikers Association. I was asked to participate because I have a unique insight into this issue because I am not a packer or pack station owner. The same principles apply today in Yosemite as they do now in SEKI (and as they did in 2012 in SEKI). The Yosemite and SEKI wilderness areas are substantially similar when it comes to the decisions at hand for allowing stock use.

04/20/12

To: United States District Court

Fr: Southern Yosemite Mountain Guides, Ian Elman

Re: Plaintiff's Motion for Injunction: Pack Stock usage HSHA v SEKI NP

Dear Judge Richard Seeborg-

I have personal knowledge of the facts described below:

I am writing to you today in regards to the letter sent recently about the court's ruling in the lawsuit against SEKI as it pertains to the Wilderness Act and pack stock usage.

My experience is first hand and I can unequivocally say that pack stock usage is indeed necessary in order to allow access and usage of the SEKI. SYMG has shown thousands of people, over the last 20 years, the beauty of the wilderness areas all throughout the Sierra, with SEKI being arguably the most remote and most special of all those places. Some people don't need to use stock and can carry everything they need on their backs day after day and for those people we offer backpacking trips. But for many people - perhaps the majority of average Americans - additional support is needed, especially into the remote wilderness of SEKI.

By offering an option to have the help of pack stock on some of our departures, we aid certain populations of people to experience their own wilderness areas that they wouldn't normally get to see. Our two biggest user groups for pack-stock supported trips are families with young children and an "aging" population of Sierra lovers and enthusiasts. It isn't uncommon for us to lead trips that have 8-10 year olds on them with their parents. Another common demographic is the late 60-late 70 year olds.

This year we have a group scheduled for a trip that has 3 generations on it: A grandfather, his sons and his grandsons. In this example he has been on a few backpack trips with us. However, this year his knees and back weren't up for the rigors of backpacking so we decided to plan a pack trip. He is so excited to share the beauty of the wilderness with his extended family, especially his young grandsons. Pack stock is making this possible.

I had a woman on a trip last summer that had been in leg braces for nearly 20 years as she suffered from rheumatoid arthritis since she was a young adult. The trip we went on was the first thing of this nature she had been able to do. Pack stock made this possible for her. Needless to say it was an emotional trip for everyone and a lot of tears were shed. Life changing. Made possible by stock. On yet another trip we had a hiker with Sleep Apnea who needed his battery powered C-Pap machine to sleep for his health and safety. Each battery pack weighed 15 lbs. and lasted 3-4 days without charging. He had to bring 4 battery packs (60 lbs. worth) to make it for his 2-week journey through Sequoia Kings on the John Muir Trail. Pack stock made this possible. These are just a few of examples of the many, many people that we have taken to various parts of SEKI NP with the aid of pack stock.

In addition to these people, every one of our pack-stock supported trips is filled with people who believe that they are physically or emotionally unable to

access SEKI or other wilderness otherwise. In my experience 85 to 95 percent of the people who travel with SYMG to visit the SEKI using pack stock would be unable to experience this wilderness if such trips were not available and they had to carry all of their gear and supplies on their backs.

In conclusion, I think we all know what will happen to the Pack Stations if this lawsuit doesn't allow the Park Service to authorize stock use, they will go out of business! As for the outfitters that utilize the pack stations we will also be handed some hard economic times in an already tough economic climate. However, the real loser in this scenario is the average American trying to enjoy his or her own wilderness through the assistance of pack stock. This would be the biggest tragedy to have to say to people "you can only see the beautiful places in the wilderness if you can carry a heavy backpack!"

Thank you for your time on this matter.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct. This document was executed on April 20, 2012, at Santa Cruz, California.

Sincerely,

4. Half Dome and JMT usage:

As the Park Service makes decisions for the current management plan, there are 2 more topics that should be addressed: the extreme high use areas of Half Dome and the increasing popularity of the John Muir Trail. We too have seen an incredible increase in demand the last few years for these two trips and anything associated with them really.

A. Half Dome:

We like the idea and execution (even as much as it hurts our commercial business) of the new limits on daily Half Dome permits. We realize that the Park Service has tough job juggling demand and protecting the resource, 2 facets that typically pull against each other. We feel the daily HD quota is doing a good job. However, the backcountry wilderness component for backpackers I think has failed the general public. If people are able to backpack Half Dome and were able to acquire the wilderness permit for it (an already herculean effort for popular trailheads in high season), they should be able to be free to go where they desire and if Half Dome is what they desire we feel the daily quotas shouldn't apply to them. By having the additional HD quota on top of the wilderness trailhead quota you have essentially cut the supply when demand is higher. This, remember, is on top of the already huge cut from the day-hiking public. It isn't the backcountry user that is/was clogging up the cables on Half Dome it is the day hiker. You solved the problem by limiting day hikers but are pinching the backcountry wilderness hiker by having a further quota on Half Dome in addition to their trailhead permit.

However, I realize we aren't talking about the quota system on HD in this new Mgmt. plan so instead of complaining about it we brainstormed here in the office and came up with a solution. What about allowing through-hikers the ability to climb Half Dome without the extra permit? Clearly a through-hike or extended wilderness hike the main goal is to be out in the wilderness not just "bag a peak" or climb the trophy of Half Dome in the shortest amount of time possible. To this end we propose that an extended wilderness hike or through-hike be deemed any hike that is more than 4 nights long. This would include all permits that start outside of Yosemite as well as any permits that start in Yosemite. This would effectively eliminate the peak bagger who just wants to Climb Half Dome as fast as he or she can. For this person, the current wilderness and with additional HD quota would still give him or her that option (which is important, again, not to discriminate our judge how people would like to experience their own wilderness). This leaves an avenue for everyone to climb Half Dome: Day permits by lottery, short overnights 1-3 nights by current additional HD and wilderness quotas, as well as the freedom for anyone who starts outside of the Park or is hiking as part of extended wilderness hike of more than 4 nights to be able to continue to hike Half Dome with their current wilderness permit.

B. John Muir Trail:

With the recent popularity of long distance through-hiking, especially on the JMT, we feel that the Park Service shouldn't be widdling down the available usage (Donahue exit quota), but quite the opposite. We should all be looking for ways to responsibly serve the demand for this trip. We feel that through-hikers on the JMT deserve an additional quota, a separate quota to hike one the world's most beautiful trails. This is an often life-changing and certainly life-affirming experience for people and we have been providing this opportunity for decades. With the Donahue exit quota, the Park successfully addressed the issue of the Lyell and surrounding permits for Yosemite users getting filled up by through-hikers, but by putting in a separate quota this takes the solution a step further. They "solved" Yosemite's issue but at the expense of what the general public really wants, which is a more reasonable process to be able to hike the John Muir Trail. We feel that a separate daily quota for JMT specific through-hikers should be instigated. Out of this quota, it would serve the public well to half available for a guided group: 15 for general public, 15 for Outfitter Guides. Leave the Lyell permit as-is to serve the Lyell Canyon as intended. This will take pressure off of the other permits that also are allowed to request Donahue exit quotas (Sunrise, Happy Isles, Glacier Point).

Thank you for time and effort and taking my comments into consideration. Please feel free to call on me for any additional explanation or input as a private citizen or in a professional capacity.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 494 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 16:43:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the public scoping process and placing importance on comments from locals and organizations that have the experience and background to speak intelligently about all facets of the wilderness plan.

Topic Question 2:

Rock Climbing Guiding

Stock Use

JMT Use

Half Dome Use

Limitations of current wilderness permitting system

Comments: Dear Yosemite,

In regard to the Wilderness Stewardship Plan I am pleased for this opportunity to pass along the following thoughts from the perspective of a commercial operator. SYMG has held permits to guide park visitors within Yosemite for over 20 years. We get great pleasure in introducing park visitors to the Yosemite Wilderness and look forward to continuing opportunities to do so.

Need for continued commercial use:

We at SYMG feel that the presence of experienced & informed local guides add great value to the park and all its visitors.

A. Value of commercial operators to the public

The ability for the public to hire a professional guide to accompany them on their wilderness outing has great value. As agents of the park we offer interpretation of the park's vast cultural and ecological resources. We tell stories of the regions pioneers, offer information about current management & research programs, teach Leave No Trace principles, and craft unique itineraries suited to the interests and abilities of our clientele. The well-rounded outings that we are able to provide here in Yosemite offer a more enriching experience than if folks had traveled here on their own.

B. Value of commercial operators to Yosemite

As we all know, the designated wilderness areas of Yosemite are sensitive to human use, misuse, and overuse. Local commercial outfitters are in a unique position to understand the current and long-term effects of use and it is in our best interest to help the park manage these sensitive areas. As "agents of the park" we work on the ground to ensure LNT practices and wilderness regulations are followed. We also add an additional layer of safety in the backcountry since our guides are all highly trained medical professionals and experienced in risk-management. And those efforts reach far beyond our own trips. Independent park users often approach SYMG guides for advice or information regarding their trip. SYMG guides also proactively approach independent park users in instances where we can be of service to them, particularly for stewardship and safety matters. In these ways we share responsibility with park rangers in interfacing with the public.

How many operators are needed and who should they be?

SYMG is in favor of limiting the total number of commercial operators that can operate in the wilderness areas of the park.

We feel that there should be a focus on local companies who are both physically and personally tied to Yosemite itself. I see several benefits to these concepts for Yosemite:

1. Local outfitters are more in-tune with long-term and current management issues. This sets us up to act as more exceptional stewards than companies that may run only a small handful of trips each summer and who bring in guides from other areas.
2. Having a small number of outfitters allows Yosemite the opportunity to focus more on each company's programming, ensuring that the park's own visitor experience and stewardship goals are being met.
3. Having a small number of outfitters has great potential for Yosemite to reduce the amount of time and money spent on managing commercial services.

Rock Climbing Guiding

We are in favor of allowing additional outfitters to offer rock climbing and mountaineering outings to park visitors.

Some competition is a good thing. Competition pushes the quality of programs & guides, drives better customer service, and gives visitors the choice between outfitters who all have their own style and strengths. We recommend selecting a small number of local companies whose purpose and goals are in-line with the park's own visitor experience and stewardship goals. We feel that these companies should be required to provide guides who have current AMGA and/or PCGI certifications to ensure a high-level of safety and quality to park visitors. We feel that it is not in the park's best interest to open up rock and mountaineering guiding to just any certified guide. Instead, these guides should work directly for the chosen local operators who will ensure the quality & safety of programs as well as adhering to Yosemite's stewardship goals.

Stock Use

We are in favor of continued stock use with Yosemite Wilderness.

A: There is a public need for stock use

Having personally guided trips within the Yosemite wilderness for the past 12 years I have had many guests join me on stock-supported trips that would not have been able to "realize" the wilderness without stock assistance. Commonly for us here at SYMG, these are families with small children seeking a memorable family outing, or older folks who can still hike well but whose knees and backs do not allow them to carry full backpacks anymore. These types of groups deserve to be able to enjoy Yosemite just like any other person who might be able to carry his/her own gear. This is all, of course, in addition to the many other benefits to the public and park that commercial operators provide, as noted earlier.

B: Management ideas for stock use

We at SYMG take great care on all of our trips to follow stated regulations for all aspects of wilderness protection. We are in favor of site-specific regulations to protect the wilderness resource and we trust in the research-based management strategies deemed necessary by the park managers. We are in favor of:

1. Designating opening dates, grazing levels, and trail use quotas as deemed necessary.
2. Allowing for high-lined camping and bringing feed into areas where grazing is restricted. This allows for managed use in areas while still allowing for long-distance travel within the park.
3. Allowing private outfitters to use the established corrals at High Camps and ranger stations. This will minimize meadow use and drive stock use to "non-wilderness" areas.
4. Designating stock camps in high-use areas. This will help alleviate the concerns of non-stock users who may want to camp away from stock. These stock camps can be listed on permit literature so other users know to avoid those camps. This could be particularly useful in Lyell Canyon. I would expect that designated stock camping/grazing areas would have similar scenic value as other non-grazing sites within the immediate area. It is important to take a wide-view when planning stock-use regulations, focusing on the practicalities of actually executing a trip. For instance, items #2 & #3 not only allow for protection of the wilderness resource, but also allow for through-travel in sensitive areas that connect other portions of the park, which is necessary for long-distance travel through remote wilderness areas.

Commercial Quotas

We are in favor of separate commercial quotas for wilderness permits.

Commercial quotas are something that currently works very well in the National Forests adjacent to Yosemite. Commercial wilderness quotas would allow outfitters the flexibility needed to cater to the demands of the public who require commercial services in order to experience the Yosemite Wilderness. One

issue for people who require guided services is that we are not able to effectively plan trips for them after the 6-month-in-advance dates that currently exist. Commercial quotas would open up additional possibilities for these types of wilderness users.

John Muir Trail

We feel that there should be no Donahue Exit quota for the JMT. We feel that there should be separate commercial permit quotas for guided JMT trips.

Donahue Exit Quotas

Currently there is a greatly increased amount of use on the JMT corridor, which is being defined as a problem. Certainly the argument can be made that if there is increased demand there is increased need for permits. Removing the Donahue exit quotas allow use to return to 2014 levels and will help with the problem of increased demand.

Commercial Trail Quotas

The addition of separate commercial quotas allow for visitors to join an organized group that has all of the benefits to Yosemite and its visitors, as described above. In addition we also help to reduce trail use by creating efficiencies with resupplies and other associated logistics, and we camp people at lesser-known campsites to reduce impact and crowding. Currently it is extremely difficult for outfitters to plan and execute JMT trips, despite the great demand by the public for our services. Having separate commercial JMT quotas will serve to reduce use based on these efficiencies, ensure LNT practices are being conducted, and serve to meet the demand by the public. Commercial JMT quotas would also allow for the park to determine when these trips depart order to control use. The guides themselves act as agents of the park, serving to protect the resource, educate the park visitors, and accompany people who would not otherwise be able to enjoy this world-class scenic trail on their own.

Half Dome

We feel that summiting Half Dome via the "Cables Route" should be allowed when participating in any backcountry trip that requires wilderness permits.

The current system for managing Half Dome misses the point of adhering to wilderness goals. Instead of sharing in the experience of an exhilarating summit with other people, visitors are now subject to several months of pre-planning, lottery systems, and rangers who create blockades and check permits using wifi and iPads. This experience does not enhance wilderness character, and it is exactly what people are trying to get away from when they set out into wilderness. If the park feels that the day-use permit system must remain in place, then at least open up Half Dome to all backcountry users who hold valid wilderness permits, are camping overnight, and traveling through the Half Dome corridor. This should include permits obtained from other agencies, such as Sierra and Inyo National Forests. This offers people the ability to include a notable and challenging summit during their trip. As often cited in the adventure travel industry, one of the hallmarks of a well-planned trip is the inclusion of "meaningful challenges" and expanding the ability for people to include the notable and challenging summit of Half Dome during their trip can be life-changing. Yosemite owes everyone that opportunity.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 495 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 16:46:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It doesn't maximise the current use of the park. I personally would love to explore the park in a much more intimate way in the safest possible way, ie with a certified professional guide.

Topic Question 2:

Unsafe and limited access to the park. Also heavy pollution with poorly managed logistics.

Comments: I would like to see the park opened up to more guides to encourage greater tourism, boosting the local economy and engaging more people to enjoy the park and all it has to offer...

Correspondence ID: 496 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 17:03:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The Yosemite Wilderness holds some of the best rock climbing in the United States, and the Park is doing a very good job at preserving the climbing there with its climbing rangers and bolting ethics. However, I would like to see a change in the permission of guided parties to access climbing. As it currently stands only one company is allowed to guide technical rock climbing in Yosemite, and this is wrong. A single permit holder policy prevents modern standards and professionalism from making their way into guiding practices in the Park, and guides wages are minimized due to the lack of an open market for employment. Guests have no options in selecting their guide, rather they are told they must climb with one of the guides from the monopoly company, and in climbing, partnerships cannot be made in a day. Guides in a monopoly permit holder operation are discouraged from seeking professional training and development because they will then demand a higher (liveable) wage and risk losing their jobs when they as for a raise. In short, a monopoly on the guided climbing permit is bad for the guests of the national park, and bad for the guides who live off these visitors.

Topic Question 2:

Since guided climbing in the Yosemite wilderness is not at capacity, I think an important issue is the lack of a modern system for allocating guiding permits. The single-concession system to guided Wilderness climbing provides no benefit to the park's visitors and no benefit to the guides or the guiding industry, but rather only to a few owners of the company. For the benefit of Yosemite National Park's visitors, please consider allocating a few CUA permits for certified mountain guides and rock climbing guides. This will allow the park's visitors more choice in selecting a guide and thus their partner in a potentially dangerous activity. Certified guides are better stewards of the wilderness than anyone else, and understand very well the conflict between use of a resource and its destruction.

Comments: Thank you for your consideration. I foresee a future where guided access to the wilderness is determined not by a monopoly company interested only in profits to be extracted from this wilderness (at a cost to both the visitor and the guide), but rather by merit and certification in the eyes of an international Mountain Guide governing body. This will be better for guests, who will have a safer, more personalized experience in the national park, and for the guides, who will make a liveable wage and be better stewards of the land. This change is coming, and Yosemite National Park should choose to

be at the forefront of such change and not lagging behind.

Cheers,

Jeff

Correspondence ID: 497 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 17:03:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Do your best to make sure the wilderness remains wild and manage the influx of visitors on a daily basis.

Topic Question 2:

As a climber, it would be great if there were more opportunities to access the wilderness w/ a climbing guide. Being from the mid-west, I am familiar with the areas and if I want to make the most out of my short trips... I am reliant on using a guiding service so that I can leverage off their knowledgebase.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 498 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 17:05:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The NPS does a great job of facilitating over 3 million visitors per year to several Yosemite's amazing locations.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness are finding ways to improve the public access to technical terrain with qualified professionals.

Comments: Yosemite National Park Service may better serve the public by making several updates to park policy.

Allow the public to diversify whom they may hire to access the wide variety of terrain that Yosemite offers and increase the terrain available to the guided public. The American public should be able to hire the rock, alpine and mountain guides of their choosing to help them access the backcountry and climbable terrain.

This could be done by issuing low ratio Commercial Use Authorizations to qualified individuals and small businesses. A similar approach has been successfully taken in Mount Rainier National Park.

The businesses and individuals allowed CUA's annually should be held to the highest qualified standards in the guiding industry. AMGA and IFMGA guides are trained stewards of the land and resources in backcountry across The United States as well as incredible resources to the visiting public in general.

The U.S public should be able to hire a guide that qualifies for a CUA and whom they are familiar with to guide them in Yosemite National Park.

Thank you for your time!

Correspondence ID: 499 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 17:36:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
In this the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act I think access to wilderness is more important than ever.
I value that the NPS manages Yosemite Wilderness in a way that allows the largest number of people to have direct wilderness experience with minimal impact on the wilderness. These experiences lead directly to people falling in love with wilderness and becoming lifetime supporters and protectors. That has certainly been my experience. A few years ago I arranged a High Sierra Camps loop guided by a summer NPS Ranger for six members of family and friends. Two of our party are regular backpackers, and four were not. I firmly believe that the four would not have been able to have the fantastic wilderness experience that they had - - and that they still talk about were it not for the High Sierra Camps.

Topic Question 2:

The recent upsurge in back country / wilderness hikers due to the book and movie WILD are having a big impact on the JMT and PCT trail census. I have noticed that the JMT near Yosemite is quite busy in July and August and managing trail census is important to prevent the camp sites are not overused.

Comments: I have been a backpack hiker since the 1970s in Oregon and a Sierra Wilderness hiker since 1994. I am currently (age 61) completing section hiking the John Muir Trail, and have hiked in the Desolation, Carson - Iceberg, Ansel Adams, Sequoia-King's Canyon and several more wilderness and BLM areas. This is very important to me.

Please continue supporting the High Sierra Camps system. These profoundly beautiful trails, vistas and camps need to be kept open as a gateway to wilderness for young and older hikers alike.

On our family hike we were paced by a couple in their late 70s or early 80 who were not members of our party, but followed the same route. Every evening

they were the very last to arrive in camp. They would head straight to the mess tent to dine and share the day's experiences with us all, and the next morning they were the first out of camp. I firmly believe that without the support of the High Sierra Camps that couple would not have been able to be out there making that hike.

Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 500 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.27,2016 17:37:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.
Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue facing Yosemite today is over crowding in areas near roads and parking lots. Visitors should be encouraged to tour in groups and to come at times when the park is less crowded. Activities such as hiking, backpacking and the use of saddle and pack stock should be encouraged because they make use of the more remote areas of the park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 501 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Educating the public about the restrictions and proper use of wilderness areas is paramount to the success of the preservation of these areas for future generations; the park service has done an immense job of educating large numbers of previously un-reached segments of the visiting population. Along with strict enforcement of the restrictions for backcountry users, this has led to huge decreases in impact on these areas even with expansive growth in the number of backcountry users.

Topic Question 2:

Updating use policies for private and commercial use. For private use, reconsidering stances (not necessarily changing) on bicycles, livestock, dogs, etc., to make sure they are inline with the Wilderness Act's intention and, secondarily, user demand. For commercial use, specifically, guiding, there needs to be an increase in diversity and opportunity for those guides that are trained and certified at the highest level, nationally and internationally.

Comments: In line with the education emphasis from the park service, increasing diversity, quality and quantity of commercially guided options available will increase the number of users that are educated by trained, invested professionals about the proper use and preservation of our wild places. The current concession for commercial guiding of rock climbing and mountaineering does not serve the interest of the park service nor the public users. Limiting the use of the land to one company and its guides is not a policy that leads to excellence in quality of education and safety. Increasing the amount of available Commercial Use Authorizations to guides and guiding companies that hold the highest professional certifications and that operate and educate their guests on low ratio courses and climbs is a policy that will result in a more educated, safer group of back country users in Yosemite. Economic justifications for the increase in CUAs for certified guides and companies are perhaps as compelling as the educational. The current management policy affects, negatively, the commercial opportunities of AMGA* and IFMGA** certified guides across the country. When the acquisition and retention of a clientele is undermined because of permitting and use limitations on our public lands, the policies of the park service need to be re-examined and updated to fit the needs of the public while staying within the restrictions of the law. The public seeking a guided experience in Yosemite's wilderness are also affected economically by the current management. The lack of diversity of options and the ability for guests to use a guide they are already familiar with negatively affects the experience and educational opportunities available in Yosemite.

*American Mountain Guides Association

**International Federation of Mountain Guide Associations

Correspondence ID: 502 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Keeping it open! We need more not less horse and hiking trails. Fewer ATV trails. The best way to see the park is on horseback because you are one with nature and can walk up on animals and hear the wind. We need pack animals to be able to get back into the back country to camp.

Topic Question 2:

Keeping the Sierra Range open for naturalists, hikers, campers, trail riders, and the public in general. Keep the range open to grazing stock.

Stop using Helicopters to go over the area and do maintenance. It's not in keeping with the "Keep it wild" policy. As a member of Back Country Horsemen we try to get along with other visitors and encourage others to leave no trace. Manure is healthy for the ecology. Paper and other visitor trash is not.

The west has a history of back country horse riders and back country camping. DON'T loose it.

Comments: Give equestrians separate camping and day site locations!

Correspondence ID: 503 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Currently, the National Park Service does a very good job at managing the park. It's well protected, which makes us happy.

Topic Question 2:

Regardless of what we do, we have an increased population with an increased desire for outdoor participation in the use of our lands. Currently, we have two ways to deal with this increase of population. The first and current option is to put a cap on the limit of visitors per day. This is effective, however, its taking away the one opportunity of their lifetime to experience one of the greatest wilderness on this earth. Option two is to increase education by letting mountain guides lead by example. If we set up a system, you increase educators, such as trekking guides, tour guides, wilderness guides with the proper certifications, such as the AMGA, wilderness education, leave no trace, we help to create a better, safer experience. We educate the public in general by being there, leading by example for the rest of current visitors.

Comments: I've been guiding for 22 years, 11 trips to Everest, and the bottom line is that it's up to me, with all my certifications and all my experience, as an American, I still need to travel abroad, to work, and to educate my clients. I will serve better to society if I can educate my clients about the great outdoors in my home country, so they can experience and learn to care about my land.

Correspondence ID: 504 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the technical climbing accessibility and how YNP has partnered with rock climbers in rescue and stewardship.

Topic Question 2:

In my opinion the most important issue is making commercial technical climbing more readily available to sole proprietor guides and small guide companies.

Comments: I love Yosemite and specifically the technical rock climbing YNP has to offer!

My points are:

1. As a licensed rock climbing guide I have clients that have established a trusting and great relationship who would like me to guide them on technical faces within YNP. And this is not currently available.
2. As an outdoor enthusiast I have always practiced the highest stewardship and as a guide I'm an asset to public lands in regards to modeling and teaching "new" outdoor enthusiast to practice stewardship that works.
3. Please consider making available commercial use to sole proprietors and small guide services.

Thanks,
Dean Olin

Correspondence ID: 505 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the park service is trying to inspire Leave no Trace principles and that they are adamantly working on reversing the effects of humanity on the wild creatures by training them to fear humans.

Topic Question 2:

The Allowance of qualified guiding to be more open in the market Especially with the Embrace of the AMGA Scope of Practice model in the works. It's extremely important for all matters of safety to keep a tight reign on guiding limited to Certified Professionals, but by limiting the guiding rights to only the Yosemite Mountaineering School the NPS has essentially established a Monopoly (which according to Federal law is Illegal in many respects). A very Sensible objective would be to have Legitimately Established permit program where Guides could come and Pay for a Season Pass (\$25-\$45) that they pay for upfront when they submit their Certification in Guiding (which will then be double checked with the Legitimate certifying Organization). The Guide will gain rights to guide after the Check and if they do or don't check out the NPS keeps the payment which will continue to fund it's many projects. Professional guides are Very knowledgeable and Experienced, They have the ability to take a sport that can be seen as dangerous and make it safe and accessible for the common man. The increase in their presence will also bring about an overall improvement in ethics when it comes to Leave no Trace practices and Safety as a whole. YOSAR will have a decrease in injuries and deaths to respond to with the increase in Medically trained certified guides spread across the park. I am a practicing Medical professional as well as an all mountain Guide and I think there is more value to having such individuals congregating in one of the most sought after destinations in the world especially if you have such massive numbers of visitors to the park per year already. The NPS keeps experienced people from being there who can save the NPS from being overwhelmed.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 506 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

That it is open to those who what to have a wilderness experience.

Topic Question 2:

Global warming creating fires. Over use without good management.

Comments: Members of Panhandle BCH Chapter of Idaho have visited Yosemite Wilderness and reported that it was a unique experience and would be

enhanced by using stock including horses and mules. Allowing stock users to explore the many vistas and features of the park allows many people to experience this public area that may not be capable to see it due to physical limitations. In this regard we propose/support that stock use not be regulated out of existence but a cooperative effort of education, permits and enforcement be included in the Plan to allow continued use of the compatible areas in the Park. As with back packers the modern horse packers use light weight equipment. We usually take more out of the woods than we bring in because we can haul debris out and haul maintenance fixtures in if necessary. Back Country Horsemen practice Leave No Trace and can assist with programs in educating the public. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and we would like to see use of stock in the back country continue its legacy by cooperative management.

Correspondence ID: 507 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.
Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.
As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.
Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.
Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.
The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering). Again, please pass this along to your clients-having the park hear from the guided public is equally crucial.

Thank you

Correspondence ID: 508 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 18:39:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

Topic Question 2:
Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

Comments: As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 509 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I do plan to ride my horses someday in the Yosemite Wilderness. I would hope the trails have not diminished in miles, amenities or left unmanintained. That would be very unfortunate to all who enjoy the use of this wilderness.

Topic Question 2:
I would say the lack of funds to maintain the wilderness. Funding and grants have become so important in keeping our wilderness areas in balance with the needs of the people who use them. Having many volunteers is also important. Working together in an organized manner can get so much accomplished.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 510 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I have had the privilege of riding my horse in Yosemite, as well as hiking in this wonderland. My cousin, visiting from South Africa, and I even managed to climb Half Dome while staying in Curry Village. The endless opportunities of exploring Yosemite, at whatever level of intensity suitable for that individual, is the marvel of this national park. Realizing that the park is a precious jewel and needs to be protected from over use and misuse, the Park Service has done an admirable job.

I hope the diversity of opportunities to explore Yosemite can be maintained.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 511 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 19:24:02
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
current system does not provide for diverse opportunities for visitors that would like to visit and access Yosemite wilderness with a guide

Topic Question 2:
protection.... in order to protect this area, it would be best served if outdoor enthusiasts utilized the services of a guide that is trained. this would ensure better chance of protecting the environment. modern trained guides are invested in protecting this area, they are professional stewards of the land and this wilderness resource.

Comments: the highest professional credentialed guides should be considered as a selection criteria. they are able to provide the guide quality and skill to ensure visitor safety, resource stewardship of the land and reduction of social impacts. those credentials are met by guides that are AMGA Rock and Alpine certified and those with IFMGA certification as well

Correspondence ID: 512 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The National Park Service provides public access to one of California's true treasures. Yosemite has earned itself a worldwide reputation, and rightly so.

Topic Question 2:
Overuse is perhaps the central issue, in my opinion. Furthermore, commercial opportunities are so great, and annual visitation rates so enormous, that limitation of commercial enterprise is very important. That said, commercial restraints should be fair and balanced.

Comments: I am a certified rock climbing instructor based in California. My current understanding is that guiding operations in Yosemite are limited to YMS. I feel that others who hold proper certification should be allowed to guide in the park. This would provide the park with revenue through a permitting system, while giving individuals like myself the opportunity to operate in the completely unique environment that is Yosemite National Park. However, guiding operations are a commercial enterprise. It is my belief that commercial operations should always come second to non-commercial use. Extension or expansion of any commercial operations in the park should always consider and accommodate the interests of non-commercial use.

Alex Bury
Earthworks Climbing, Ojai CA

Correspondence ID: 513 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 21:12:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The permit system is a great solution to preserving solitude for us all.

Topic Question 2:
Movies like WILD have brought a new group of visitors to the PCT/JMT. How can these newbies stay safe, keep the wilderness pure, and accomplish their goals? Accredited guides can create customer's who are stewards of the land. AMGA is one of these groups.

Comments: Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering)

Correspondence ID: 514 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 21:13:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Discourages driving by making free public transportation available. Access for disabled people.
Being over 80 years old, I value the opportunity to access the back country by mule for camping and hiking. The loss of that opportunity would make access to the back country only for the young and/or very fit backpackers.

Topic Question 2:
Too many visitors. Traffic congestion. Not enough camping available in the valley. Too commercialized.
Provide outside large free parking (add a Dollar to entrance fee. Have few or no fast food places to reduce trash. Encourage camping in the eastern entrance area to reduce congestion in the valley.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 515 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 21:13:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan. In particular, I wish to comment on the High Sierra camps.

In 2015 I went on a 5-day guided High Sierra Camp loop hike. Consequently, my view of Yosemite was vastly altered. I had never appreciated Yosemite's vastness and wilderness until I went into the back country and touched ferns growing lakeside, smelled the damp of the forests, napped on sun-warmed granite with the river rushing by and seen towering monuments and deep valleys from utterly different perspectives, usually after hiking miles and miles.

I could not have done this without the High Sierra camps. I am nearing 60 years old and can't carry the equipment. I would have been lost without a National Park Service ranger guide.

The High Sierra camp experience was so moving that my husband and I are including Yosemite in our estate planning.

I urge you to strike a balance between preservation and recreation. Make cuts that will lessen the environmental impact of the High Sierra camps but please do not eliminate them entirely. For example, while we appreciated the large, hearty breakfasts and three or four-course dinners, we felt minimal offerings would have been more appropriate.

I have lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for most of my life. My previous interactions with Yosemite were driving through, hiking a few trails, taking pictures and getting something to eat. Because I had the opportunity to live in Yosemite's back country for five days, my eyes were opened to her true beauty. I was touched to the core and am profoundly grateful.

Correspondence ID: 516 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 22:17:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the importance of notifying the public of issues like LNT, bears, fires, etc.

Topic Question 2:

Group size. As an outdoor instructor, it's not realistic to get programs to run in Yosemite with the group size limit of 8 for off trail travel.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 517 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 22:23:14
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value and enjoy the opportunity to ride my horse in the Yosemite wilderness. I subscribe to the Leave No Trace way of participating on horseback and do my best to be a good steward on the trails. I am 65 years old and until I was 50, my wilderness experiences in Yosemite were with hiking boots and a backpack. But now I depend on my horse to get me in and out safely and I hope to continue doing this for many years to come. I have always enjoyed sharing the trails with livestock and think it adds a wonderful dimension to the wilderness experience, especially because of the historic link it represents. I hope all levels of stock use in Yosemite's wilderness will continue: private, commercial and administrative.

Topic Question 2:

I would like to see more day use of stock, not less. If horse trailer parking areas were more available, we could access areas and return to the trailer at night, rather than camp out in the wilderness. If there is a conflict with backpackers and stock users, then designate separate areas for camping. I think there is room for all to share in the beauty and solitude, but designated and appropriate access is very important.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 518 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 22:49:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Attentiveness to public comments.

Topic Question 2:

1. Balancing multiple objectives consistent with the spirit of the Wilderness Act.

2. Finding a way to increase access to the Park and with this appreciation for the importance of wilderness without unacceptably changing the wilderness.

These goals are difficult to achieve. Without public access, then public awareness and appreciation for wilderness will diminish. If this slips too far there will not be sufficient resources or public will to protect wilderness. At the same time the wilderness must not be appreciated to death. There is a give and take dynamic.

A promising approach would be a renewed emphasis on the expansion of low impact activities, which get people into the wilderness in a responsible fashion with enforceable leave no trace principles. As with many national parks I have visited, most people gather within a very small radius of a paved park road. The stresses on park resource in these segments of the Park should not diminish initiatives to expand experience the wilderness sections of the park so long as this can be done responsibly.

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for informing the revision of the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship plan. I write as an avid climber in wilderness areas for more than a decade. I am seeking a wider degree of choice in guided climbing options in Yosemite. It has long been my practice to be led by guides who have attained the highest level of certification from either or both the American Mountain Guide Association (AMGA)

and the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA). My prior experience with non-AMGA/non-IFMGA guides has been sub-optimal and dangerous. Over many years, I have developed relationships with a cadre of AMGA/IFMGA guides who have nurtured my development as a climber. It is a dream of mine to be able to share the rope with these guides in Yosemite.

Yosemite, of course, is among the most iconic climbing destinations in the world. I would like to have at least some chance to be able to climb in Yosemite with trained professional guides of my choosing. Presently, the guides that I climb with have told me that the economics cannot justify their guiding under the permit of the sole concessionaire in the Park. I know from experience that Mt. Rainier National Park after many years of being dominated a single guide service opened up opportunities to other guide services, particularly relative small scale services. This opened up my opportunity to reach the top of Mt. Rainer. Similarly, the stewards of Yosemite National Park should be able to expand access to the climbing public by distributing commercial use permits to a broader array of guides consistent with the principals of the Wilderness Act.

I totally understand that the Yosemite Park stewards must balance the degree of commercial use with the preservation of the splendor and solitude of Yosemite, but surely the degree of commercial use for climbing guides is something more than just one concessionaire in the Park with a lock on commercial guiding.

I understand that there may be trepidation about expanding use. To make this more tractable, consider a phased approach in which in the initial phase of opening up opportunities for broader commercial guided service, guides must have the highest certification offered by the AMGA. I stress that it must be the guide that has this certification, not simply the guide service. This provides for measured expansion of the cadre of rigorously trained professional guides who are attentive to risk management, technical climbing skills, client care, and leave no trace principles. This will serve to limit the stress on the natural environment of expanded use and diminish the likelihood that the expansion of the number of guides would materially raise the risk of climbing accidents.

Through the leadership of professional guides who have undergone the systematic training of the AMGA guide programs, I have over the course of thousands of feet of climbing through the years deepened my appreciation for the wilderness. Climbing has offered me an intimate physical connection with the natural elements because it demands that level of engagement. Climbing has also offered me uniquely wondrous views of natural beauty from unusual vantage points that have included clinging to the underside of rock roofs and stemming my body between soaring pillars of rock. These are experiences I would love to have in Yosemite with one of my trusted AMGA guides. Thank you for considering my comments as you update the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship plan.

Correspondence ID: 519 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:24:47

Correspondence Type:

Web Form

Correspondence: I have worked and enjoyed Wilderness areas. I have hiked in snow where the only other footprints other than my own were made by deer, squirrels and turkeys. I have also walked in National Parks and National Forests where my footprints were along side of other people's footprints. I enjoyed all of these experiences and am writing to you to preserve Yosemite's Wilderness areas and character. There is a need for all types of areas for our growing Nation. Please keep Wilderness as it was intended, not manipulated by man.
thank you

Correspondence ID: 520 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 01:10:56

Correspondence Type:

Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

For the most part, trails are well maintained. Restrooms are accessible, and the public transportation system is improving in Yosemite valley.

Topic Question 2:

Accessibility. Freedom to be able to book a campsite or lodging. Campsites are so limited & unavailable these days that if you don't book it severely in advance, the system says its full. WHEN IT ACTUALLY ISNT. If you show up, there is ALWAYS empty sites open yet the system turned people away. The system has gotten a lot better in recent years with recreation.gov and other internet standardization, however it still could be managed better. Overall, there should NEVER be a "FULL" sign showing. FULL = poor management. The park should have enough space and management skills to provide for the needs of the public. Too often, the rangers have the "full" sign up regardless of the count and they're just too lazy to accommodate every one or don't care.

MORE TRAILS! I understand the need to not let people frolic everywhere, but that is half the joy of nature! Being able to sit in a meadow or on a cliff where there is no other people is what makes the national park so spectacular. If you're going to make people, "stay on trail", then you better have a TON of trails to satisfy every curious person out there.

Accessibility of half dome. Limiting the trail to a lottery is not necessary. I climbed it a LOT before there was a lottery and it was totally acceptable. The bottleneck is the cables. Yes this needs management. You can manage that section like you can manage construction on highways. Just because the road is down to one lane, doesn't mean to stop giving people access to the road all together. This severely limits freedom which is completely unacceptable. Just have a ranger at the top and bottom and manage the amount of people on the cables at once. If people have to wait, so be it. Limiting the entire trail to a lottery is NOT the best way to manage the problem and severely limits the public. If the cables are open, and their are hikers wanting to ascend, they should NOT be turned away for lack of a "lottery ticket". Good intentions do NOT always have good outcomes. Or even better, just put up a SECOND set of cables. One lane up, one lane down. Then forget this stupid lottery. That makes much better sense and still keeps it safe.

More PARKING! Trying to park in Yosemite valley in the summer is like trying to drive through Los Angeles at 5pm on weekday. There are SO FEW parking spots, its ridiculous. Build an underground parking garage if you have too. Something needs to change, and limiting the amount of people is NOT the answer. There is LOTS of space to make more parking, especially for the Awahnee. That self parking lot is ALWAYS FULL. I don't want to tip the vallet, I want to self park. Please make the lot bigger.

Good staffing. There are many "government workers" that you know are government workers because of their horrible attitude and unfriendliness and/or lack of mercifulness.

Drain Hetch Hetchy reservoir. I saw an old black and white photo of the Hetch Hetchy valley and it was GORGEOUS! With new desalination technology,

reservoirs are officially outdated and unnecessary. Lobby to have San Francisco build a huge desalination plant and lead the state in it water industry. It will take a few hundred years, but the valley might actually recover.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 521 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The National Park Service is the steward to the National Parks for all Americans. I appreciate the hard work and care of all National Park service members. One of my son's is getting his Wilderness and Wildlife Management degree and I know he aspires to join your Service.

Topic Question 2:

How to preserve the natural wonder of Yosemite balanced with access for those who want to enjoy it.

Comments: I would like to see the Yosemite Wilderness provide additional opportunities for access under the care and direction of professional guides that adhere to Leave No Trace. I believe such opportunities could improve the Park overall and help increase donations to maintain the Park.

I believe professional guides, to include mountain climbing guides, would augment the National Park Service as stewards of the land. I've seen this kind of partnership work with hiking, mountain biking, and climbing professionals in other areas.

I urge the National Park Service to partner with professional climbing organizations that have good reputations, like AMGA. I think the plan should include limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain, yet have to meet essential National Park Service standards.

Thank you for your Service.

Correspondence ID: 522 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 06:36:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Reduced automobile traffic.

Topic Question 2:

Impact of climate change. Manage wildfires as much as possible. Use hybrid and electric shuttles.

Climbing is limited to climbers of pretty high ability. Would be nice to allow certified guides to take clients, as in Rocky Mtn Natl Park.

Comments: ATVs and other off road motorized vehicles have no place in a national park.

Correspondence ID: 523 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 07:21:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Use of the park by riders on horses and mules in addition to hikers is extremely important. I hope to be able to ride in this park one day, and to explore its many trails the same way the original settlers to the area were able to. This is a national resource. Please allow it to stay used by the public.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that financial resources are less than they have been in the past, but we must keep and maintain our national parks. There is no other place in the world a person can see a Sequoia. These are essential resources.

Comments: Horses are beginning to be denied entry into parks. This is a sad, sorry state for us to be in. Our settlers covered the distance on horseback and with horses as pack animals. It is important to keep these resources open to the public to continue such use.

Correspondence ID: 524 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I only value that the resource is available.

Topic Question 2:

It is a perishable resource. Climbers have a large interest in the preservation of this resource for the duration of its existence. A stronger voice will not rise to support and protect this resource.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 525 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 07:35:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the magnificence of the Yosemite Wilderness and the opportunity for the general public to enjoy it in as ecologically intact and unaltered way as possible.

Topic Question 2:
Commercial Guiding, Available Access.

Comments: In-line with general recreation management principles, any further regulations or changes to permit systems should be implemented in the most specific ways possible, so that they a) address only the issues present and b) limit the restrictions to specific locations or instances.

Commercial rock guiding in Yosemite National Park should be allowed to include access by educational institutions and non-profit organizations by special permit. Such organizations should be allowed to teach in the Yosemite National Park Wilderness with reasonable restrictions in group size and leader certifications such as AMGA Single Pitch Instructor. Current guiding companies such as YMG and other AMGA backed companies typically serve a very small elite and wealthy portion of the general population. Other less financially affluent groups deserve opportunities to enjoy the Yosemite Wilderness through dynamic interactive experiences such as climbing. The current regulation is overly restrictive.

Correspondence ID: 526 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 07:36:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

Please include a thorough review of stock in the Wilderness, including how to minimize impacts on environmental quality, trails, and the overall wilderness experience. Larger stock parties can have a particularly significant impact on the wilderness experience of others, but all stock have some impact with respect to habitat degradation, water quality, and other environmental issues, as well as important but less quantifiable issue of the quality of the wilderness experience. See, for example: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20039816>

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 527 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 07:48:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think that the permit system does minimize the number of back country hikers and helps keep it pristine.

Comments: Please do not eliminate the packer spot trips in the high country. There are many of us who would not be able to back pack to some of those wonderful areas without the help of the mules and packers.

Correspondence ID: 528 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 08:02:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It does allow climbing and access to the beauty of the park.

Topic Question 2:

Allowing more broad access to climbing that can be done by a wider range of people in a safer way through the use of a climbing guide

Comments: I love to climb and approach it very methodically and often with the assistance of a highly trained and AMGA certified guide. This has been my progression into climbing for the past 9 years. I would love to experience some of the longer routes in yosemite, but would want to do with the help of a guide. I also want to make sure this guide has obtained the proper certification and training before using them. I would like to see the park opened up to commercial guiding from guides with a high level of certification such as AMGA rock guide.

Correspondence ID: 529 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 08:13:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

It's a great park with well managed trails

Topic Question 2:

the rangers need to be nicer to climbers and ALLOW BASE JUMPING

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 530 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the opportunity it gives to people to give back service wise in the park, and the access to such grand and scenery. The park allows a freedom to explore and see things and take part of an amazing place.

Topic Question 2:

One issue is that visitors are limited in their ability to access the yosemite wilderness if they want a guide. It is through guiding services people not only get to experience the wild differently, but are often educated about the importance of the resource, and get formally educated in wilderness skills and ethics. Currently, guiding for mountaineering and rock climbing is limited and needs to be diversify its commercial access for the guided public. Guides are

trained, and invested in environmental stewardship. We should promote those activities, as it helps connect the general population to our lands and appreciate them in a new light. Only guides with professional terrain specific credentials should be considered for this commercial access. This will ensure guide quality. Credentials being AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 531 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 08:51:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As a professional outdoor educator and climbing guide, I believe that:

1. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.
2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness—from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.
3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.
4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.
5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

Thanks,
Felix Dowsley

Correspondence ID: 532 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Stewardship of the lands. Mountain Guides can be a great asset in seeing this carried forward, instilling a sense of responsibility in their clients as well as the climbers around them.

Topic Question 2:

Choice and access. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. The Yosemite Wilderness has so much to offer for visitors that is beyond the easily accessible trails and parking areas. A guide can really enrich a visitor's experience and showcase some of the beautiful terrain Yosemite has to offer.

Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness—from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Comments: Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 533 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a trail rider. Exploring Yosemite Wilderness has always been on my 'must do' list. To be able to enjoy the backcountry of Yosemite on my horses would be an incredible privilege. It has been an incredible privilege to do so in other national parks and wilderness areas of the West.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze

my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I am grateful to the National Park Service for enlisting public comment on this critical topic. To enjoy the unique beauty of Yosemite and utilize leave no trace practices would be a incredible gift to all Americans. It is critical to not overburden the back country with too many people and animals. Obviously, too many people and trash can destroy this unique area. I look forward to assisting the NPS in any way that I can to create a responsible plan be it by lottery or reservation.

Correspondence ID: 534 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value in Yosemite that the Park Service has done a good job to balance wilderness ethics with the needs of climbing. Climbing is a big part of Yosemite's history that should be preserved.

Topic Question 2:

Maintaining access for climbers and other adventures in the park in a sustainable manner. Right now rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in the Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial guiding services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Comments: As an American and as an internationally certified mountain guide (IFMGA/AMGA), it is currently very difficult for me to work on public lands in the US. For that reason I currently do most of my work outside of the US. I would love to be able to one day return to my country and work in my profession on the public lands. Yosemite is an example where access is even more limited than other areas. The public would like to have access to a diverse group of certified professionals who they can hire for climbing and adventures in the park. Mountain guides are stewards of the land who teach their clients safe climbing practices and who teach their clients how to better use the resource in a sustainable manner. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to attain. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These are: AMGA Rock Guide, AMGA Alpine Guide and IFMGA. Thank you for reviewing public comments. Sincerely, Miles

Correspondence ID: 535 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.28,2016 09:34:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value access to trails, climbing routes, beauty, and the more remote areas for all who are willing to work for it. I appreciate that the Park is also accessible

to disabled visitors, but feel that large scale motorized access carries a much greater impact and cost, than do the muscle powered uses of the Park.

Topic Question 2:

Managing use for the greatest possible number of visitors, including access to a diverse array of muscle powered activities, is important for maintaining ongoing public support for Parks and wilderness, but is difficult to achieve in a way that preserves the resource. This challenge should be addressed by encouraging muscle powered access and activities as much as possible. Easier access for foot traffic could be favored over motorized traffic. Outside-the-valley parking combined with frequent shuttle service; prioritizing trail maintenance and camping opportunities, as well as commercial guiding and other services to support these muscle powered activities, are tools that can create more real value for visitors and greater appreciation of what Parks and wilderness have to offer us, as individuals and as a society.

Comments: As a lifelong hiker, climber and professional climbing guide, I believe that the public goods of safety, education, preservation, conservation, physical health, cultural values and love of wilderness and nature, all are served and enhanced by the presence in the Park of professional climbing guides. Professional guides are logical and ideal partners to land managers in furthering these and other values and goals. Continuing access to commercial climbing guide services in the Park will be essential to the Park Service's ability to best fulfill their various duties to the public and to the resource.

Individual guides' training and credentials have far more impact on the quality of service and safety provided by the guide, than does affiliation with any particular guiding service or company. It is in the interests of the public, the resource, and ultimately the Park Service itself, to ensure that those guides operating in the Park have the most professional training at the highest available standard. The American Mountain Guides Association's individual guide training and certification, embodies that highest available standard at present in the U.S.

Any future process for distributing access to commercial guiding permits should, as much as possible, favor individual guides access to such permits, based on their training and credentials, rather than any affiliation they may or may not have with a larger or existing guide service. This will help to maximize the number of the best trained and qualified guides working in the Parks.

Finally, there should ideally be some avenue for permitting guides from other countries, provided they have the equivalent highest possible level of training and certification, to bring their clients to the Park. My main argument for this provision, is that this activity will happen in any case, and it is in the best interests of public safety and resource protection, that these visiting guides should have a relationship, and contract of some kind, with land management, rather than operating invisibly and underground as it were, unknown and therefore unable to be of service and benefit to the greater public.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

Correspondence ID: 536 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I do feel that YNP has done a good job at limiting the highest use areas, including the Happy Isles entrance to the JMT, and the high use Sunrise corridor.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue to me, as an American Mountain Guide Associated Rock Guide, is the lack of access current under the CUA. With only YMS serving the population on would be rock climbing clients, there is only one service to choose from, and there is much room for guiding potential in the Park. Several specific routes are without doubt at capacity in Yosemite, and we do not wish to impede on those routes. But as a guide holding an internationally recognized license, I would hope to be able to take my clients to adventurous climbing routes in the Park (especially Tuolumne), and thus give more of the public an opportunity to experience the true nature of Yosemite, not just the handful of crowded routes they get to choose from with YMS alone.

Comments: See above. Please open guiding to AMGA certified Rock Guides, and fully certified AMGA Mountain Guides.

Correspondence ID: 537 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 09:49:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the climbing opportunities that the Yosemite Wilderness affords. It is not only a natural resource that lends itself to recreation but has become a cultural icon of an American era that values wilderness, independence, the testing of the mind and body, and shared value of the beauty that is Yosemite. It is therefore a resource, both natural and cultural in nature, that deserves to be protected and cultivated for use.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues are ones that hang delicately together in balance: visitor use, private climbing recreation, and guided climbing access. Increased visitor use obviously has a profound impact on the Yosemite Wilderness and must be stewarded in a way that cultivates the best experience for as many seeking it as possible. However, both personal (private) climbing for recreation and guided climbing opportunities seek to steward visitor use well. The climbers' ethic is on the rise, and Leave No Trace is an important part of that ethic. Private (non-guided) climbers are increasingly educated and willing to compromise to protect the Yosemite Wilderness and their ability to freely use it. Guide organizations equally seek to protect the wilderness area and preserve their ability to use it. Protecting the ability of small guide organizations to access permits and climbing areas, even in the presence of larger organizations, is essential to preserving the cultural history and experience of climbing in the Yosemite Wilderness - especially as demand for that experience increases.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 538 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 10:01:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the efforts taken by the Park Service to protect the physical natural environment.

Topic Question 2:

Wilderness is threatened by public non-use. Greater use of Wilderness lands by the public leads to better protection from damaging extractive industries. Greater public visitation helps justify continued Park Service stewardship. The Park Service should seek ways to encourage all non-motorized visitation, even at the cost of increased user contacts. Popular areas should be managed with the goal of allowing for high use, without damage. More remote areas should remain accessible though trail maintenance, construction and increased camping opportunities.

Comments: I will limit my comments here to one issue, that of backcountry guiding within Yosemite National Park.

Guides can play a valuable role in both protecting the land, as well as helping the Park Service in its management and efforts to maintain public safety. They are a helpful resource. However, as with any user group (especially commercial ones) the Park Service has choices in how they manage this group of individuals and their clients.

In order to maximize the potential benefit to the Park rock climbing, hiking and backcountry skiing guides should be:

- â€ highly experienced
- â€ certified in their discipline and areas of expertise
- â€ subject to a strict and very limited maximum group size

The profession of mountain guiding in the USA has changed greatly over the last decade. The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) now has a very refined guide certification program, addressing all the varied disciplines of mountain guiding. The most experienced guides now are highly trained, better paid, and operate both independently as well as for varying guide services.

The old model of concession-based permitting has not kept up with the development of the profession. Concession-based permittees are plagued by high turnover (due to low wages) and lack of certification among their guiding staff (also the result of low wages).

Though the concession model has historic roots, and can offer a beneficial in-park presence, it is not adequate to encourage the quality of guiding and the potential benefits to the park that an individual certification-based CUA permitting system can offer.

Though I encourage the Park Service to look upon guiding as a benefit to the park and other user groups, I also would encourage the park to require that guides operate in small groups. For technical mountaineering and rock climbing groups should be no larger than 3, including the guide. For hiking, snowshoeing, backcountry skiing and rock climbing courses, group size should be limited to no more than 6 including the guide.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Correspondence ID: 539 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 10:18:29

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Though these requests were written by Wilderness Watch, I full-heartedly support and recommend them:

â€ respect the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services in Wilderness;

â€ stop routine use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the Wilderness;

â€ remove nonconforming structures and uses in potential wilderness within the Park and designate those areas as Wilderness.

â€ ensure that all alternatives preserve and maintain wilderness character, and require the Park Service to better manage visitor use. Natural processes must be allowed to define the character of the wilderness.

Good day.

Correspondence ID: 540 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 11:09:22

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

For at least 35 years when I lived in California I visited Yosemite National Park at least once a year to backpack in the High Country and cross-country ski in the winter time. I greatly valued the quiet and solitude found in the "back country" away from the roads. Last year I was finally selected to take a 7 day guide tour of the High Sierra camps; this was a wonderful experience, painful at time, but quite wonderful.

In the past, I have appreciated the excellent condition of the back-country trails ("back-country" to me means more than 5 miles from a road-head). The chance to escape into the wilderness has always been important to me. On the guided tour (Ranger lead) I noted again that most trails were quiet once a few miles from the trailhead and the presence of the High Sierra Camps meant the even my 75 year old knees and back could still experience the wonder of the high country.

The High Sierra Camps themselves were a wonderful experience and the people operating the camps good representative of the Park Service and the company they were employed by. I would hate to see these camps go away as they afford an opportunity to visit the lesser populated areas of Yosemite more easily for someone like myself. From my perspective the Park Service has always done a good job keeping the back-country open and accessible. I hope it can stay that way.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues are reduced funding from Washington and over-whelming numbers of visitors. Fifty years ago the Fourth-of-July weekend brought (at the time) a record number of visitors to the Park. In the Triple Peak area we saw one family and two bears and one cub. Times have changed.

I would continue to limit back-country travel to keep camping sites from being overwhelmed. It is a distraction to backpackers, but the restricted encourage my friends and me to visit other areas of the park.

And lets face it, to keep the Valley and Toulumne Meadows sane it may be necessary to close the gates to the park at times. The number of cars and traffic in August of 2015 was shocking to me. Or perhaps there can me reservation for cars and once capacity is reached, close the gates. I know this is harsh for visitors but we are loving not only our parks (and other areas)to their detriment.

But please, do not change the High Sierra Camps, a wonderful asset (and yes I have entered again the lottery). But perhaps in addition to 5 and 7 day guided tours, there could be 3-4 day tours; TM-Glenn Aulin-May Lake-TM (via shuttle), or TM-Sunrise-Merced Lake-Yosemite Valley-TM(via bus). The shorter trips may appeal to families and people with shorter schedules.

I am not trying to add more people to the trail system, but spread them out more.

In the end, however, I fear we will need to limit access to the park, all parks and perhaps require prior reservations. This is not something I find appealing, but it may be necessary.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 541 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Yosemite NP is a unique and vital part of our nation's natural resources. It offers diverse opportunities to experience the beauty of the Valley and High Sierra. I value several specific things that the NPS does to manage this resource:

- 1) YNP receives heavy visitation throughout the tourist season(s). NPS manages these numbers well so as to minimize (additional) impacts to the Park.
- 2) NPS provides a critical resource in YOSAR to help support those adventuring within the Park.
- 3) As someone who has visited each corner of Yosemite, from camping at Crane Flats, to climbing El Cap, to skiing off of the Dana Plateau, I realize the scale of the Park and the flexibility required to manage it. I appreciate the effort that is put into the management of such a place. The fact that I can leave the Valley and find a unique wilderness experience with each visit is a testament to this effort. Thank You!

Topic Question 2:

- 1) Wilderness designation of the Central Valley corridor and the "experience" that the NPS would like to provide its' visitors
- 2) Working with a more diverse population of mountain guides in the Park who would like to use their public land to provide a responsible, educational, and adventurous experience for many.
- 3) Recognizing that there is a population of visitors to the Park that are not having their needs met through the current retail-focused structure on the Valley floor.

Please read comments below for details-

Comments: We are extremely lucky to live in a place where we can focus on issues such as this and consider them a priority in our lives. I am well-versed in the history of our National Parks system and the role that the automobile played in its development.

I do not feel that the current state of the Central Valley corridor falls under the criteria of Wilderness- as described in 1964.

This, I feel is an important issue that needs attention. In my opinion, the Central Valley corridor should give up Wilderness designation in order to focus management resources on areas that fall under the criteria. I don't think it's likely that the NPS will change the current retail/commercial-focus of this area. So let's just call it what it is...

That being said, there are many people who would like to enjoy the Wilderness that the Park does offer. Some on a longer-term basis of more than 12-24 hours, outside of a hotel room. Many appreciate the Park so much that they would prefer to stay for an entire season. I think that concessions need to be made for this population to enjoy the Park responsibly, without feeling like they have to break any laws.

Finally, I would like to bring up the importance of diversity and flexibility in allowing the Park's visitors to hire a professional mountain guide. I work as a full-time mountain guide certified by the American Mountain Guides' Association and the International Federation of Mountain Guides. I feel lucky to have opportunities to show people places of beauty and adventure around the country and world. These experiences help to cultivate a spirit of respect and ownership that's critical to preservation of our wild places.

In my opinion, the current structure of guiding in YNP, which falls under a single commercial concession, excludes many who are looking for this type of experience. I have no doubt that the current guides employed by the Park concession are good at what they do. However, individual guides build long-lasting relationships with their guests that thrive on adventures to many of our country's Parks. Fortunately, we are now able to visit them through low ratio Commercial Use Authorizations for well-qualified individual guides and small businesses. Many people have been able to visit Denali, Mt Rainier, the Grand Teton, and Rocky Mountain National Park because of this system.

Yosemite, the Mecca of modern rock climbing is one of the last holdouts. I would encourage those working on the revised Stewardship Plan to lead the way in developing a system that public land managers and mountain guides worldwide will emulate. This is a very special place that people deserve to see and will immediately respect.

Thanks for your time and all of your hard work!

Mike Soucy

Correspondence ID: 542 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I Value that they understand there is a diverse user group in the park and they attempt to cater and balance to all. It seems they understand that Rock Climbers are not the main user group of the park, and in user numbers it is not nearly as tapped as other visitors interest. It could be nice to spread the love and continue to make it every body's park.

Topic Question 2:

Conservation. The tourists that get trucked into the park by the bus loads don't understand wilderness preservation as much as climbers. Climbers tend to be there own stewards and can be quite low maintenance. Climbers prefer natural environments and don't rely on development and 5 star services to enjoy the wilderness.

Comments: It is very frustrating that I lived in Yosemite working for the Park for 3 years of my young life while living in a tent in Curry Village and couldn't return to the park years later with international clients to show them such an amazing place that is such a big part of my life.

I have since achieved the highest credential certification for a mountain guide and moved to France to use it since I can't work in the US with my credential do to the permitting process and the monopoly controlled concession that is allowed to guide in the Park.

I have many international clients that I would love to bring to the park and can promote trips through my own marketing outlets in the climbing and guiding industry, but I would just be bringing my clients to the park and giving away work I pitched and generated.

IFMGA Mountain guides are credential based guides with years of training to get to where we are. I would hope the Park will reconsider the amount of exposure and economical contributions opening up the permit could do for the Park. Credential based guiding is the future. I pray you will someday let us in,

regards,

Joe Vallone

Correspondence ID: 543 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 11:29:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The Parks values and efforts to keep the use at a sustainable level for the resource.

Topic Question 2:

Access to the Wilderness by all. I believe it is wrong to deny visitors access to the Wilderness. Comercial guiding, mountain guiding, ski guiding and backcountry summer and winter guiding provides a great way for visitors to learn respect and stewardship of the Yosemite Wilderness. Denying access or limiting commercial guiding is not in the best interest of Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I strongly believe that guides/educators are the best way to help preserve the Wilderness in Yosemite. Guides/educators have a vested interest in the health and welfare of the land. I ask that you expand to access for commercial guides/educators to a level that will allow more visitors to utilize their expertise and knowledge.

Correspondence ID: 544 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 11:44:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The maintenance of the trail system for back country access. Limiting use along sensitive habitat areas, and providing services to reduce human impacts. Even though I've hiked to the top of Half dome many times in the past, the current system of limiting access is acceptable to me, as this had become an overused area, and was showing signs of strain.

Topic Question 2:

Too much public impact and traffic in the valley. Too many foreign visitors limiting access by local and US citizens. Need to reduce the amount of tour buses allowed in the valley.

Comments: Work with current park vendors contract to eliminate need for licensing of names and products.

Correspondence ID: 545 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 12:08:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the park service manages the Yosemite wilderness as interpreted by the wilderness act of 1964. I believe that it is important to uphold the natural integrity of our national wilderness areas; the park service must also provide opportunities for the public to responsibly recreate in order to find value in our natural world. This is a difficult task and I believe that the park service wilderness permit system has achieved this fairly well, though with room for improvement. We are still finding significant impact in our backcountry areas due to misuse from the unguided general public and overcrowding in Yosemite Village itself.

Topic Question 2:

I believe there are many important issues within the Yosemite valley wilderness.

The National Park Service in Yosemite has allowed a select few companies the ability to hold guided wilderness recreation activities as a sole concession. The Park service has also allowed a large corporation (Delaware North Company) to copyright historic place names and run our national park as a commercial money making enterprise and not a park focused on natural interpretive education, and human powered recreation activities.

I believe infrastructure should be created that will ensure that overcrowding with people and with motor vehicles will not continue. Examples of such infrastructure include a parking and bus system (See Zion Natl Park) with limited permits for private automobile use within the park for special uses and during off season times. A large scale plan for bicycle use within the park should also be created. Yosemite Valley is relatively compact, bicycles are an easy way to get around the floor of the valley efficiently.

In Yosemite National Park, some guided activities are not at full value potential. This includes guided rock climbing and mountaineering. It is often evident that the unguided public in Yosemite Valley is unprepared for climbing the walls of Yosemite valley. The unguided public is often unprepared for the climbing itself, and has little knowledge of their impacts on our wilderness cliff areas. This lends to an unguided climbing culture that is extremely impactful to our wilderness cliff areas and has a low margin of safety.

A professionally trained mountain guide (see American Mountain Guide Assoc.) offers her guided clients the value of experience and natural interpretation. The guided public in the wilderness often has less impact than the unguided party because of the experience of the guide and the educational opportunities presented by the guide. Minimum impact climbing/camping, naturalist interpretation, safety, as well as wilderness regulations are the focus of guided groups in the wilderness. I believe this type of guided public use has much more potential to reach the public in Yosemite National Park through the expansion of Commercial Use Authorizations, and Temporary Use in the park.

I believe that the park service should allow for multiple Commercial Use Authorizations within Yosemite National Park for guided climbing activities. This will create a diverse range of opportunities for the public to experience climbing within the park. In addition this will force operators to offer the highest quality program possible. These outfitters should be held to professional standards, such as accreditation and certifications by the American Mountain Guides Association; the national standard for mountain guide education.

I also believe a small lottery of ten day temporary use permits should be created for guided climbing within the national park. This will allow for a diverse set of programs from around the country and the world to offer high quality climbing and natural experiences on the wilderness cliff areas of Yosemite Valley. A fine example of this type of CUA/temporary use program is in place in Red Rock National Conservation Area, NV.

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on our national park.

Correspondence ID:	546	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan,28,2016 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Topic Question 1:				

Yosemite National Park has a great system for getting permits issued. I know there could probably be some improvements, but overall the system is great.

My biggest concern is the lack of ENFORCEMENT. As a guide in the backcountry, I spend most of my trip ensuring that the back country is protected from my customers, as most of them are new and still learning. It is a waste of my time to have to enforce it with everyone else out there as well. I watch people throw trash in the woods, sneak up to Half Dome, camp illegally, make fire rings, etc. There isn't anyone there to help except at LYV. If you even just rotated some volunteers that could go out and have a presence, it would be okay...but I only ever see my groups get checked, when there are disrespectful private parties out there breaking rules.

Topic Question 2:

Human impact is the worst. I don't have a solution here. Trails are being cut because people don't understand why we have trails. Trash is being left behind because people don't get why it's bad. It could just be a lack of education and it could be a lack of enforcement. You would have to look into it, but everyone knows they won't get caught.

Comments: -Commercial Guiding Services should be continued as they offer the common visitor educational and scenic opportunities and choices for how they want to experience the park.

-We offer hundreds of youth an invaluable wilderness and youth development program.

-I suggest they honor Half Dome permits for all backpackers in that vicinity.

Correspondence ID:	547	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan,28,2016 12:27:45				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				
Correspondence:	Topic Question 1:				

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Use of pack stock as a management tool allows federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. Use of pack stock instead of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze

pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

The WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Comments: Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Correspondence ID: 548 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 12:34:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Availability of wilderness activities, particularly rock climbing, in both the Valley and Tuolumne Meadows has me returning annually for the last 11 years, and for several years periodically prior to that. It is a unique environment, world renowned for the climbing activities, available in an extremely picturesque setting.

Topic Question 2:

While I have enjoyed the opportunity to climb with several guides from Yosemite Mountaineering School, their monopoly on guiding within the park has been a definite negative. Opening up the access for other, AMGA certified guides/guiding companies, would facilitate competition and provide options to climb with guides with whom I have trust and experience who previously have only been able to guide outside the park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 549 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I can no longer hike the back trails, so must do so on horseback. When National Parks close their trail to stock use, those of us that can no longer hike are closed out of our National Parks.

Topic Question 2:

I believe the hardest problem to solve, is sharing the trails with urban folks that dislike large animals. Folks feel they damage trails, and they are can be afraid of equine when they meet them on the trails. We address could these issues by education of equestrians and hikers on proper protocol when meeting each other. We, BCH, volunteer working on trails on wilderness trails to help keep trails open to all users. And we teach and practice Leave No Trace.

Comments: I would also like the Parks Service, to keep commercial pack stock outfitters so all folks have the opportunity to be able to discover the thrill of overnight camping in the Wilderness. By removing stock from the Park you limit access to the strong of knee, and backs. In our current population of folks, frankly most visitors do not physically meet the qualifications for back packing.

Thank you,
bjk

Correspondence ID: 550 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 13:15:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

1. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.
2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.
3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.
4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.
5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.
6. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 551 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 13:44:10

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The preservation of land.

Topic Question 2:

The distinction of what the NPS calls Wilderness in YNP. The park is overcrowded. A shuttle or bus system would be ideal.

Comments: Please allow commercial climbing guiding within YNP. Ideally, the selection process would be credential based. Guides that have sufficient training/certification would be able to work within the park boundaries. This could come in the form of small low ratio CUA permits.

Correspondence ID: 552 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

They keep it open and beautiful.

Topic Question 2:

Managing access to the public and keeping the environment sound.

Comments: I think it is incumbent to keep trails open for equine access...after all that is how most people got cross country to open up the area. It is our heritage and privilege to traverse trails on equine. Custer State Park in South Dakota is a good model for this with their equine camping facilities and trails.

Correspondence ID: 553 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 13:51:55

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

One of the great parks in the world, and very well managed. Everyone I have dealt with in past visits has been professional and kind.

Topic Question 2:

Funding of course remains an ongoing issue, and I am sure appropriate political and private sector actions are being pursued.

Comments: Myself and my family will come to Yosemite much more frequently if we are able to work with our guide for climbing and hiking, who is not a local Yosemite guide. Despite his qualifications, I understand that Yosemite is considering having only Yosemite local guides eligible to guide at Yosemite. We would not climb with new guides at Yosemite, despite their qualifications, as a matter of comfort and history with our historical guide.

Correspondence ID: 554 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 13:52:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

I think the lack of properly trained guides who have or can obtain a permit is unfortunate. I would suggest that small ratio guided permits be obtainable for credentialed rock climbing and mountaineering guides with AMGA certification be available.

Comments: Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource which add to the experience of clients and students being guided in the park.

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. This could be granted based on credentials and for accredited

by the AMGA businesses.

Correspondence ID: 555 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 13:52:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

- That there's a quota system at all.
- That the whole park is not designated campsites only.
- That you have to pick up your permit and be subjected to a ranger talk and LNT ethics.
- That managers are starting to talk about destination and exit quotas.
- That permits don't cost much.
- That specialists pushed for and got the Half Dome permit system instituted.
- That the Wild Center in the Valley got remodeled.

Topic Question 2:

HUMANS AND THEIR IMPACTS, due in part to ignorance, poor behavior, and exceeded capacities. Also climate change, invasive species, and political pressure for access. See below for a breakdown.

Comments: It is simply not Wilderness if every 3 minutes of an entire day I encounter a new party. It is simply not Wilderness if there are people camped on all sides of me 6 miles in. It is not Wilderness if I can hear motorcycles and trash trucks. It is not Wilderness if human use is impacting ecological function and areas are obviously hammered. It is not Wilderness if I have to walk by a semi-permanent settlement of tents where the privileged are eating a steak dinner they did not make, sleeping in a bed they (or someone they hired) did not carry in, and shitting in a toilet that flushes.

I write as a concerned citizen that has also worked for this park for many years. I've seen human impacts only becoming more pervasive. Any avid backpacker will tell you the place to go backpacking in the Sierra is in the south, away from Yosemite National Park. Is this reputation of degraded Wilderness one we want to be known for? While Yosemite Valley may be a sacrifice zone that is so hyper-political we may never dream of saving it, many of us have high expectations that this Wilderness Stewardship Plan will have the cojones to make some changes and say some NOs. If you manage the people, you can protect the wilderness. Thanks for your dedication to making a change.

High Sierra Camps

- Get rid of all of them. This is a legacy use that has long surpassed its life expectancy. They are nothing more than cherry stems in Wilderness creating impacts and associated satellite impacts.
- Turn them into backpacker camps with composting toilets, boundaries defined, and a commissioned ranger camp host or volunteer camp host
- If concessionaires or private individuals want to lead trips to these camps, group sites could be included, but groups must reserve sites.
- Due to the popularity of a toilet, reservations may be needed for these backpacker camps in general.
- Offer no other services.
- If management is feeling too wimpy to get rid of all of them, at least get rid of all those with flush toilets and leach fields. Leach fields should not be in or near Wilderness. I also think its sacrilegious to have one at Vogelsang - this is a very sensitive subalpine environment, not to mention how beautiful and remote it could be if this camp were removed&.
- Ranger-led loop hikes may still be appropriate/desired, but folks will need to carry their own stuff or hire stock support.

Stock Use

- Pair down Trail Camp use of pack strings. One string to pack in supplies, one mid-project, and one at the end of the season. Have Trail Crew and cooks carry in their own food.
- Define stock camps and their boundaries. Yes, this will involve you setting up posts or stakes and trammeling a touch.
- Require reservation of these sites so as to better track who is using which one. I know things are unpredictable, so perhaps you could have a reservation system where you pick a day but you can end up their either the day before or the day after. Enforce these reservations.
- Scale down admin use of stock even more if possible. Other crews could help with cross-cut log out early season, thereby providing more work for more people and eliminating some stock use.

Wilderness Education

- Develop a wilderness behavior/LNT ethics video that is in a kiosk where people wait in line for their permit at the Wilderness Centers. REQUIRE PEOPLE TO WATCH THIS VIDEO somehow, either by quizzing them or building a room where you take their ticket and they have to go in there. Denali does this, so why cant we? It is an honor to enter Wilderness and there are things we can share with people that will keep them safe and the place untrammled. Get audio translations in French, Spanish, German, Japanese&...? You could also have this video online so folks can watch it before they get here - perhaps there is a system that can print a certificate for the person that they can bring in&.or something that auto-replies to the Wilderness Center that they have completed the viewing.

- Spend more time with folks before you issue permits. I know rangers do the best they can with what little time they have and the masses that are waiting. But I would like to hear backpackers describing how to poop in the woods rather than a ranger saying, 'This is how you poop in the woods. Got it?' And then all the backpacker has to do is say Yup. Quiz them, make them describe, or force them to take a quiz at the end of the video!

- Paint a line where people wait for their wilderness permit that indicates 20, 50 and 100 feet. Help people understand this distance by making them wait alongside it.

- Educate visitors about ecological function and the development of multiple trail ruts with a combination of waterproof displays outside of the visitor center, pamphlets available inside the WC, and improved signage at trailheads where signage already exists. Make more of an effort to make informational materials universal - so that everything is visual and the English language isn't needed to understand. I would hazard to say that people on vacation are significantly more visual, so dumb it down so even the kid that's just tagging along can understand how they and their parents should be acting in the Wilderness.

- More campfire demos and interactive exhibits of Leave No Trace ethics.

Visitor Use and Capacity

- Designate campsites in high use areas including Sunrise Creek, Glen Aulin, Lyell Canyon (at least at the Ireland junction and towards Tuolumne), Grand Canyon of Tuolumne, Sunrise Lakes, etc. Enforce this designation at least initially by stationing rangers in these areas. In Lyell this designation would eliminate the I-thought-I-had-hiked-4-miles-in-whoops problem. It would also help with the sound problem I mention in the section below.

- In general, think about lumping current wilderness zones into the Canyonlands model - they have some places where you can camp freely and some where you have to stay in designated sites or areas. They issue less permits for these wilder destinations.

- If needed, in order to accomplish the previous, require reporting of camping destination locations. Find a more analysis friendly way of storing these data so wilderness rangers have better access to understanding how folks are moving and where they are spending each night. Far too many people end up at places like Emeric Lake, Ireland Lake, Cathedral Lakes, Royal Arch Lake etc because the trailhead quota system only flirts with addressing itineraries and specific lake basins.

- Perhaps destination quotas could address the above? If management is feeling too wimpy to designate sites in high use areas, utilize destination quotas and/or lower the trailhead quotas that lead to them. Put more backcountry rangers into high use areas to patrol in the evenings and mornings (mid-day patrols don't catch campers camping).

- Eliminate fires on top of El Cap. There is no wood to burn up there until you get a ways off the top of that rock and back into the forest.

- Get a handle on day use - hikers AND climbers. We can not expect to make informed decisions about Wilderness if we do not understand how many people are hiking, say, the first 5 miles in/out of a given trailhead. To do this, you will need to find regular base funding for VUSS or a social science contractor. Supplemental funding could come from project funds associated with trail reroutes or frog and toad habitat protection.

- Have VUSS do a study on the JMT and PCT as whole units, in and of themselves.

- Require climbers overnighting to get a wilderness permit. There is absolutely no reason they should be exempt from touching base with a wilderness ranger. Pooping in the wilderness = need to check in with a ranger. Preferably not while pooping.

- Put a sign at the Lyell footbridge that says it is the 9600 mark. Make a damn decision about where folks are allowed to make fires up there and where they are not. Perhaps the sign should be on the switchbacks above the footbridge because people so frequently camp in this area, which has plenty of crappy lodgepoles it wouldn't hurt to burn.

- Make a damn decision about whether you are going to let people camp at SubDome.

- Clarify whether we mean you can't camp 4 AIR miles from Tuolumne or 4 TRAIL miles. Same goes for roads, which I think everyone understands to be 1 air mile. Stare these grey areas in the face, make distinctions, and put them spatially on a map that we can share with the public and Trails Illustrated. Protection can not enforce grey areas and I can not do effective spatial analysis without these camping, no camping, no fires, etc zones described.

- Map all the trails with a GPS that has sub-meter accuracy. Updating the Trails layer in GIS will go a long way towards being able to speak intelligently about what is truly going on in the Wilderness, where trails intersect wetlands, which pieces of trail have been worked on and when, etc.

- In heavy traffic day use areas like Mt. Dana or Cathedral Lakes, install signage of what you want people to do. If you want them to take a social trail to Upper Cathedral Lake, give them a map. If you want them to follow rock cairns, tell them. If you want them to refrain from walking on the side of the trail and creating ruts, tell them. If you don't want them to make a fire, tell them. People will not stop trampling if you don't give them the information. And if management is too wimpy to really address capacity, then at least communicate what you want the user to do in this modified zoo-like environment you call Yosemite Wilderness.

Sound

This is one of the most important things to me when I'm trying to experience Wilderness - silence and relative solitude. My ability to experience these threatened and endangered values is frequently degraded in Yosemite due to too many people or too much noise. For example:

- How sound carries should play a roll in capacity. you can no longer camp across the river in Lyell Canyon (on the east side) without hearing people across the canyon because there are people camping everywhere. See Visitor Use and Capacity section for more thoughts on Lyell.

- Motorcycles. I hear them 3-5 miles into the Wilderness. It is NOT acceptable for one user group to have such an invasive impact to wilderness character. This is not a temporary impact if it is occurring repeatedly throughout a backpackers day.

Other

- Revisit Trail Crew and Stock User best pooh, cooking, and camp practices. These users have a big impact on the sites where they camp. When was the last time everyone sat down and had a conversation about best practices for trail camps? And inforce that these best practices are actually being followed?

- Are Trail Crew campsites documented? All cleared by archy? What about the 'informal ones (like the one near the Lyell 2013 & 2014 projects)?

- Putting fires out in Wilderness is dumb. Especially with all of the relevant science indicating so for the last 30 years. If a fire is a lightning ignition, yes, consider whether you can handle it with regard to other fires going on in the park. But avoid, at all costs, putting impacts into the wilderness that are fire-fighter related. Smoke or traffic on Tioga or Wawona Road does NOT constitute putting out a natural fire. I like that the Fire Management Team is making concerted efforts to draw large boxes around these ignitions, because the superintendent does not do well with decisions-on-the-fly. Or decisions that make a difference in general for that matter.

- Get a handle on where all special use and research permits are in operation. All this stuff needs to be on a map so managers are able to understand cumulative effects in the Wilderness. Science installations need to have year installed/year to be removed information attached to their spatial data. We can digitize zones where special uses are broadly occurring. Essentially, WE NEED TO DO A WILDERNESS CHARACTER ANALYSIS. Preferably one with components we can update periodically like the install/remove dates I mentioned previously. We are not understanding or protecting wilderness if you skip this step of character analysis.

- We have GOT to reallocate base funds towards the Division of Resources. It is utterly irresponsible for the park to expect YC and Hetch Hetchy to pay to repair human impacts, fight invasive species, and protect threatened and endangered species. Yosemite National Park is only fulfilling half of its mission and is therefore violating its promise to the American people to preserve and protect for future generations.

Correspondence ID: 556 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 13:55:11
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate the care taken of the area and the problems relating to the park's popularity and the need to try and meet users' needs.

Topic Question 2:

Maintaining the environment while allowing users to help work or just enjoy it.

Comments: When I worked for the California Legislature I went on a horse pack trip sponsored by the California Conservation Corp (CCC) to check the trail work the CCC was doing east of Yosemite. It took us a day (not sure how many hours) to ride to the work site. That didn't matter though, as the country was so beautiful and mellow.

For me it is essential that horses be allowed for individuals as well as pack strings so riders or work parties have the supplies needed to camp, to maintain the trails or just enjoy the great outdoors. Horseback riding is a beautiful way to see the scenery up close and appreciate the wilderness. Plus, many times we get a closer view of the wild animals as they are not as leery of someone on a horse.

I am not a hiker and would not have had this great experience if I had to walk. Horses allow me to continue exploring the wilderness and smell the flowers and really see the beautiful plants and trees.

My friends and I are aware of Leave No Trace practices and leave clean camp sites. Leave No Trace information should be shared with visitors so they are aware of how important it is. Also, how horse manure is nothing but recycled grass, unlike carnivorous animal output.

Horses and mules have been an important part of Yosemite's history and their use should be grandfathered in to any regulations.

Many people interested in visiting the wilderness are also willing to help maintain trails and pack in needed materials. (It is amazing what can be packed on a horse or mule.) Pack animals provide a way to get into the rougher places.

Some hikers may not like sharing the trails with animals, but horses and mules allow access to the wilderness for people like me who cannot hike; they can get people and materials in to the wilderness for work or pleasure. Riders sometimes have to explain to hikers that the backpacks change the human shape and may startle the horses. We work these things out.

Again, horses have historically been allowed, they do not have much of an environmental impact, and should continue to be included. Please Grandfather them in to your regulations.

Increased communication would probably help the different users understand each other.

Leave no Trace is important for riders and hikers alike. Signs explaining Leave No Trace and signs showing user rights-of-way would help. Install signs at trail heads stating that any trash and manure there must be placed in the available waste receptacles or taken home for disposal.

I would love to be able to trailer my horse to the Yosemite Wilderness area and park at a trailhead. Riding my horse in beautiful country is my idea of a vacation and a place to camp would be delightful!

Please allow horses and mules, donkeys and llamas, etc., to use this beautiful place. I am sure that all visitors can work together for the good of the Yosemite Wilderness. It is definitely worth it.

If I can help in some way, please let me know. I look forward to riding in the area soon.

Corky Layne

P. S. I belong to four riding clubs and know how important access to Wilderness areas is to riders and hikers alike

Correspondence ID: 557 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 14:23:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
NPS keeps access to climbing and instruction on the walls of Yosemite

Topic Question 2:

Open rock climbing, guided trips, and other instruction in Yosemite to more organizations and companies. Right now, as I understand it, only one company is allowed to guide and instruct in Yosemite. This is limiting and unfair for other companies. I suggest removing this limit and allowing more companies to guide and instruct.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 558 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 14:37:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The entity of the National Park Service is meant to be the authority which protects the National Park from development which would change/destroy/ the unique land they have jurisdiction over. I would hope that the decisions made in this process would remain in-line with the ultimate purpose of the Park Service. Let's not allow a large corporate entity to dictate the parameters of use within the park. Let's learn from Hetch Hetchy, shall we?

Topic Question 2:

There is no easy answer to the issue of over-visitation. If people don't visit, and don't become invested in the Park, -whether it is through real wilderness exploration, or barbecuing by Swinging Bridge - there will not exist in the minds of those allocating funds a reason for those funds to continue. On the other hand, how can it be beneficial to allow overuse and misuse of the Park to continue? I believe that a small part of the solution is to continue to allow a variety of guided options to remain within the park. Most misuse is the result of not understanding, and having a guide explain why it is important to stay on the trail, avoid walking across meadows, etc etc is a step in the right direction. That being said, those guiding agencies must be allowed to remain private. Guides do not guide for the money; large corporations do everything for the money. I believe it would be a conflict of interests to allow a huge profit-based entity to dictate what all guided trips in the park should encompass. Monopolies on anything are not healthy.

Comments: I think most people invested in the well-being of Yosemite understand that a concessionaire is an important part of dealing with the needs of the many visitors the park receives. If there were ten different businesses trying all trying to cater to the public, the focus would be on who could out-advertise the other. However, once again I would like to stress that monopolies are not healthy for many of the reasons outlined in the Sierra Mountain Guides article by Howie Schwartz. Of course there needs to be guidelines, WFR certs, Leave no Trace, ect ect, but allowing one large profit-based corporation to dictate every tour is unwise. Let Aramark deal with selling food and souvenirs, let them keep their own guiding programs, but do not give them complete jurisdiction in the guiding that goes on in Yosemite.

I have worked for large corporations similar to DNC and Aramark...and all I can say is that for the most part, being as big as they are, and as profit oriented, it was not always a pleasant environment. Let the smaller guiding companies continue to do what they do, for they do it well, and have much happier employees for the most part. A happy guide is a good guide.

Correspondence ID: 559 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 14:40:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value NPS's commitment to Yosemite. To me, it's my ultimate heaven.

Comments: I was on a guided trip in Yosemite in 2014. It was one of the best experiences of my life, not only to be in a place where I feel I could thrive, but also due to what I learned. I was warned by a friend that NPS is thinking of doing away with privately-guided tours in the back-country, and the thought of this makes me very sad. My guide was a wealth of knowledge to me when I was there, kept me safe, and served as an example of why we should respect the majesty of Yosemite. I would never have been able to hike the back-country unguided, or had I thought myself brave enough to do so, would certainly have made some unwise decisions along the way. My guide even took the time to educate and ensure the safety of several individuals out "wandering" without maps or enough water (this also happened in the Grand Canyon so it wasn't an unusual situation). Knowledgeable guides can only add to the NPS program and the safety of everyone out there, and limiting where they can go or how many trips they can conduct would take away from that. I hope you will not put constraints on the number of people who can safely and happily partake in something they otherwise wouldn't have the knowledge or fortitude to do on their own, all while respecting the land and all it has to offer.

Correspondence ID: 560 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 14:40:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA). Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

Comments:

As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 561 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 14:56:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think that limiting the number of visitors to keep the area preserved is valuable, and worth denying potentially too many people for the overall well-being of the park.

Topic Question 2:

Balancing the different styles of visitors. I think I would rather be a second round of backcountry permit and campsite reservations than the park being open to more commercial guiding. The people who aren't being guided are putting more effort into their stay than those being guided and should have opportunities to explore the park on their own. Guiding is a fantastic way to get new people into the wilderness and outdoor education, but those who are already educated should be welcomed at the same time.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 562 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 14:58:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Maintaining infrastructure that allows concentrated use in certain parts of the park while regulating users through the permit system in others.

Topic Question 2:

Degradation of our public lands through use and abuse of uniformed general public visitors. Increase guiding opportunities so that the public has access to use an AMGA certified Rock or Alpine, or IFMGA guide of their choice in the wilderness

Comments: The current wilderness management plan for Yosemite National park only allows its visitors one option to hire a guide for wilderness excursions; the Delaware North Company. This is easily looked at as a monopoly and the new wilderness management plan should include the opportunity for visitors to have diverse options when choosing a guide. Professional, certified guides are well trained and practiced in LNT ethics, and operate as stewards of the land, helping to inform and teach their clients the lowest impact means of traveling and recreating in wilderness areas. Rock climbing and mountaineering guiding activities are not at capacity in YNP, and the new plan should address that by allowing limited low-ratio CUA's for the Certified Guide Cooperative and other guiding outfitters. In order to best serve the general public, and maintain the highest regard for the land and wilderness, credential based access should be considered when issuing a CUA. AMGA/IFMGA certified Rock and Alpine guides have been through extensive training and quantitative examination and represent the best in the field. These individuals work to enhance visitor safety, LNT practices with visitors, and are stewards of the land. These are our public lands, and guests should have the opportunity to have a choice in who guides them in the wilderness. We shouldn't let a corporate monopoly limit the opportunity for visitors to enjoy the public lands with a certified guide of their choice.

Correspondence ID: 563 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The excellent work of dedicated Park Service employees in the wilderness and in the front country: trails, campgrounds, search and rescue, science, public education, conservation, law enforcement, maintenance.. almost everything.

Topic Question 2:

Management of the concessionaire, DNC and Aramark corporations, is generally decent, despite the drawbacks of their corporate structure and ethics. However, their exclusive access to commercial services needs to be modified to meet the needs of visitors. The concessionaire can have their monopoly on hotels, shops, and restaurants - that's what they do best. However, in the Yosemite wilderness, we need to offer visitors a choice of who guides them. This will be of huge benefit to the experience of those visitors.

Specifically in my case, I teach a system of mental training for rock climbing call the Warrior's Way. It's well known among climbers for delivering a range of mental training strategies that not only make for a stronger, safer, more attentive climber, but also apply directly to the student's life in general. Yosemite's granite crags are the perfect teaching environment, due to its rock features, setting, access, and being my personal favorite.

But this is impossible under the current system. My students and I currently go to Joshua Tree NP, or to Red Rocks in Nevada. These places are great, but why deny us the experience of doing this training in the crown jewel of the Sierra? The current system basically encourages under-the-table guiding by unqualified individuals, while preventing most professional guides from doing their job, in favor of a huge corporation with revenues of \$15billion/year. Fine - but is this really the best we can do?

Open up climbing guide access. I'm asking this for the benefit of myself, my students, my community, and the people of the entire world that visit the Park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 564 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 15:22:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

The biggest issue involves growing use. Frankly, I don't know how you do it! I feel the current practice of combining reservations with first-come access has worked pretty well. I believe that commercial stock access (packers) should continue, but with some qualifications (see below).

Comments: I've seen a lot of packer campsites, not just in Yosemite, but throughout the Sierra. Some are kept very clean; others are not. In some places (e.g. Davis Lakes, the worst I can remember at present!), I've seen manure all over as well as piled up. I don't want to just blame the packers, although in some instances some of them get careless. But there should be some way to clean up the sites- -require the packers using them to do it- -or else limit access to the most heavily visited areas to mitigate the accumulation of filth. I say this as someone whose joints now welcome a packer "spot trip" so that I can continue to enjoy my beloved backcountry. And as a former horseowner, I know that livestock poops- -and I know how to shovel the result! So I don't see this as an insurmountable conflict of interest, but as a problem in need- -and capable- -of solution.

Correspondence ID: 565 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Their mission.

Topic Question 2:

The amount of visitors who visit the park and how to regulate them.

Over management of campers in the park. Creating more space for campers.

Equal access for commercial services

Comments: In the ideal scenario, the YNP would allow more than one concession in the park. Honestly, the YNP should be the first national park to allow equal access (credential based) guiding inside of the park for rock climbing, backpacking, mountaineering, and skiing.

If an individual is certified with the AMGA or has the necessary qualifications set out by the park, all companies and individual guides should be allowed to guide in the park following all regulations set out by the park. Commercial guides should not be treated any different than the general public.

Commercial guides should still have to apply and follow standards set out by the park (and pay separate fees) but should have equal access as any other person who climbs in the park.

Correspondence ID: 566 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 16:00:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Reasonable access to wonderful mountainous features

Topic Question 2:

Necessity of guide services to promote climbing safety for all levels of climbers both rock and alpine.

Comments: It is in the best interest of the NPS and the climbing community to allow guide services in Yosemite. This will provide a higher level of safety for many Americans and who prefer the assistance of professional guides.

Correspondence ID: 567 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

Topic Question 2:

As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

Comments: Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering). sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

Correspondence ID: 568 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The preservation of our national heritage that we cherish through our public lands and the mission to sustain them for our future generations.

Topic Question 2:

The unregulated use of the resource by untrained and uncertified guides. With leadership from the American Mountain Guides Association, we can begin to address these issues.

Comments: I believe that there is a need for the NPS to offer to the public, access to the wilderness with guides who are trained to operate in the terrain in which they enter. I feel that with the right guidance from the American Mountain Guides Association, we can give the public better access to this precious resource with safety and sustainability at the forefront of their experience. I feel that the current system does not allow for public opportunity to hire trained and certified guides through the American Mountain Guides Association. This is an opportunity I believe should be afforded to all those who choose to access this resource.

Correspondence ID: 569 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
the NPS does a good job of educating the public on environmental concerns and maintains the park in the best way it can to balance availability to the public and minimise the impact large crowds have on the natural set.

Topic Question 2:

Stewardship is paramount to any plan of action. Protecting something that's wild is difficult for us men to do when it's in our nature to refine our experience and redefine our relationship with nature so that its arm chair comfortable. I don't pretend to know all of the issues facing the Yosemite park today, but one that I would like to address is access to climbing. Rock climbing is a beautiful way to experience nature, it fills the spirit with joy. It is a special privilage guides have to live their lives climbing. They help the public experience rock climbing. please allow the opportunity to guide to more people. Thank you for your consideration.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 570 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.28,2016 16:48:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Access to amazing places.

Topic Question 2:

Guided access and high standards for guide standards.

Comments: I would like to see Yosemite National Park and other areas move towards a certification based guiding access. There needs to be more than one company having control over guiding you YNP.

Correspondence ID: 571 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I own my own mules and enjoy back country trail rides very much. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.
I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.
Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.
I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.
I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.
In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.
In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.
In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.
Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.
Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.
The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include

documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: Please consider my comments above carefully.
Thank you,

Correspondence ID:	572	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan.28,2016 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

My husband and I attended the final scoping meeting for the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan in Yosemite Valley on January 20, 2016. The meeting provided additional food for thought, and I would like to take this opportunity to submit some additional comments and suggestions. I have already submitted some comments to your post office box, but I'm including them here in case the postal service doesn't deliver them in a timely manner.

Question 1

What I value the most about how the National Park Service manages the Yosemite Wilderness are the magnificent historical trails that began with the Native Americans, and were improved by stock users for hundreds of years. I have traveled many of these trails on my own horse, and value being able to see Yosemite's incredible scenery in this manner. I am grateful that the Park Service has maintained more than 750 miles of these trails, and hope that they will continue to do so. In the future, I would prefer to see routine trail maintenance done with the use of pack stock rather than helicopters.

This in line with the Wilderness Values, and the "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy. Except for Search and Rescue, and perhaps other special circumstances, helicopters are not in alignment with the Wilderness Characteristics of "untrammled, natural, undeveloped, solitary, or historical." I also value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience I can have with my horse with very little regulatory constraint and administrative intervention. I am happy that the Park Service is taking a serious look at stock use in the future of Yosemite, and hope that they will consider partnering with other organizations that have extensive knowledge on how to use our public lands without damaging them.

Topic Question 2:

Question 2 Important Issues

At the January 20th meeting Potential Wilderness Additions was addressed. I am strongly opposed to any future wilderness additions to Yosemite National Park, as 94% of the Park is already Wilderness. I understand that lack of use would be a justification for future additions. You have reduced user capacity in Glen Aulin and Merced Lake High Sierra Camps. If the Park Service creates the lack of use, I hope they will not use this to designate the High Sierra Camps as Wilderness.

At the meeting I requested that there be no future reductions of stock use in Yosemite without substantive commentary on why reductions are necessary. The answer to this was, Well, some people don't like seeing stock on trails. These people are a very vocal minority of park users, and I hope that the Park Service will not be unduly swayed by their lack of tolerance. Yosemite belongs to all of us, and stock users are more than willing to share the trails with hikers. Reducing stock use will not solve this problem. Visitor education on proper trail etiquette and safety around stock, including the use of interpretive materials at Wilderness trailheads would be more useful to solve these conflicts.

My husband and I are also members of the Mariposa Mountain Riders. This is a local horse organization that is also recognized by the California State Horsemen Association. Many of our members travel to Yosemite to ride the trails. Access to Yosemite Wilderness by private horsemen has become increasingly difficult. There is a need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads, and front country camping areas for horsemen who haul their own horses and mules.

Lastly, the Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in the Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. The Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association have extensive knowledge in this area. BCHC is the sole authorized equine Leave No Trace Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region in California. I would like to suggest that the Wilderness Stewardship Plan consider the option of enlisting these additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. This can be accomplished through formal agreements with these non-profit organizations, and would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to close or reclassify trails as either unmaintained or minimally maintained. Park personnel and the Wilderness Stewardship Plan should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and Leave No Trace program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Thank you for this opportunity to share these additional comments with you, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Comments: Here are my original comments submitted January 19, 2016

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

My husband Kevin Barry and I are members in good standing in the Sierra Freepackers and the Mid Valley Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC). We also represent the Backcountry Horsemen of America (BCHA) who has hundreds of members across the United States. BCHC and BCHA consist of dedicated men and women working to preserve the historic use of trails with recreational pack and saddle stock. Our members perform public service activities for numerous land management agencies and are continually working to educate other members and the general public on how to be "Gentle Users." The use of livestock has played an important role in the American culture. There is a long tradition of using pack and saddle stock not only in Yosemite National Park but all over the West. We are pleased to offer our thoughts on the upcoming work you will be doing to revise the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

In the past the Backcountry Horsemen have written substantive commentary on the Merced and Tuolumne River Plans in defense of stock use in Yosemite. In spite of our letters we are disappointed that the Park Service has chosen to further limit stock use in our park. None of these restrictions are justified, as there are no explanations or studies that show these restrictions are needed. Therefore, the public is precluded from offering further comments as to whether they are justified.

Furthermore, the NPS's decision to eliminate the day rides in Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows was improper. This eliminates the opportunity for the public to enjoy a step back in history to see the Park via horseback for a few hours. Seeing the Park on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by any other means. For the vast majority of visitors, that opportunity is provided to them through the services of commercial guides. This experience is also needed by aged and disabled visitors who should be allowed to experience the park in this special way. We strongly suggest that you reinstate the commercial horseback rides within the park. We don't think that your desire to eliminate the day rides to reduce hiker-stock conflict on the trails is legitimate. My husband and I took the two hour ride from the Valley last May, and did not see this conflict. In fact the hikers on the trail were courteous, and they smiled, waved, and took pictures as we rode by.

The High Sierra Camps are another concern. There is no justification for the NPS to reduce their size and capacity as is being done at Merced Lake and Glen Aulin. These camps are historical. They are enclaves and are not part of the Wilderness in Yosemite. They should be retained and embraced as part of our heritage, and are beyond the scope of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

We appreciate this opportunity to share our thoughts and suggestions. We hope that your decisions will be based on real science that will retain stock use in our park with no further reductions.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 573 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 17:21:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have not been in the Yosemite Wilderness, but have been in several other wilderness throughout the Sierra and firmly believe every one needs protecting as well as expansion. Humans have taken more than our share of land and these are important places to remain as they are. I value their pristine quality and knowing that i am not in control there.

Topic Question 2:

I think the amount of people in the park are an issue.

Comments: Fishing is important to any wilderness adventure i take. Protecting streams and rivers are an important thing for me. As well as keeping mining operations out of as much of the parks as we can.

Correspondence ID: 574 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Protecting some of the most gorgeous geologic scenery in the world and making it possible for most ordinary people to see it.

Topic Question 2:

I not read the documents. I would guess that overcrowding, erosion and possible water pollution are some of the negative issues affecting Yosemite Wilderness.

I do not know how they should be addressed.

Comments: I would like to share that I am afraid that there is a movement to limit wilderness access, particularly by livestock. The most memorable trip of my life was to ride to Yosemite's high camps with mule packer Sheridan King. I am 61 years old and have never been a backpacker and never will be. Those mules carried me for miles up to seriously high altitudes safely and successfully. We met many people who did hike into the high camps and that

caused me to wish that maybe I should have pursued a different track in life when I was younger. I can't change the past. I hope that Yosemite will figure out a way to continue to allow horses, mules and packers use the park. Not everyone was born to be a mountaineer. Mules are a great form of transportation and clearly the reason the high camps are so popular. I would hate to see the high camps close because livestock was no longer allowed in the wilderness area.

I love riding livestock in beautiful areas because the animal is watching the trail while the rider can enjoy watching the scenery. I hope that Yosemite will continue to have horseback riding options within the park to give people a chance to see the park from horseback. The rider has the advantage of being up a little higher and can look around instead of watching for trip hazards on the trail.

Correspondence ID: 575 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 17:54:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

Crowding in the Valley and on trails connected to the valley. One solution would be limit use on these trails by increasing access and awareness to other beautiful areas in the park.

Comments: It would be beneficial to outdoor education organizations if larger groups (over a group size f 8) were able to travel in the wilderness of Yosemite. Also, opening up commercial climbing to organizations other than the Yosemite Mountain School would expand the recreation opportunities for other guided groups.

Correspondence ID: 576 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 18:44:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Wilderness as a designation has certain laws on how it is managed. This type of management is vital to the continued integrity and wildness of the resource. Yosemite is clearly a resource that must be protected regardless of political and or economic agendas but it must also be in a position to be seen, appreciated and enjoyed by the public. The fact that Yosemite National Park is mostly wilderness and managed as such and any additional use is studied carefully is the single most important management tool. The fact that Yosemite National Park has seen and been open to discussion regarding additional commercial use of the resource in the way of climbing is a great step towards better managing the resources given greatly increased desire to experience the park through climbing.

Topic Question 2:

As I alluded to...with an ever increasing number of public that wish to experience the park, I believe the method with which the Park responds to the increased desire is the biggest issue. I believe that if set up properly, supporting visitors that wish to experience the Park through climbing and using a guide is a way to insure the resource is much better taken care of. To this end I think the Park should considering broadening opportunities for the public to climb with a guide.

Comments: The Park must respond to the increased desire for use of the resource in a way that maintains the wilderness character while allowing for a reasonable way for greater numbers to better experience the Park while not compromising its nature. The current concession system while effective in offering services on a broad scale, in my opinion falls incredibly short of providing a way for greater numbers of visitors to experience the Park through climbing. The following bullet points sum up my thoughts on the plan and how the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan should respond to the increased desire for guided climbing in the Park.

- The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.
- Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness , from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.
- As climbing is not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.
- Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.
- Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.
- The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Thanks for hearing my thoughts and ideas on how the Park might respond.
Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 577 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

What I value is that the Park protects and holds to a high standard the care and ecological impact of the back country user.

I am a certified Grand Canyon Guide, AMGA rock guide and a Denali Guide. My biggest concern is always taking clients into pristine area's. I believe that the Park service does that in the wilderness, not so much in the front country and where there are facilities for the general public. I recognize it is a razor's

edge, this balancing act. I truly appreciate having national Parks on that are beautiful and protected. I also guide in Europe and the difference is amazing.

Topic Question 2:

What I believe and I have not seen the metrics to support this is the continued increase in use, especially in Parks near major metropolitan area's. I worked for Outward Bound for 15 years and a great deal of that time was in the Sierra's.

What I observed over a period of time was that some of the area's we worked in became very popular as time went on and other discovered our gems, hiking trails grew out of game trails, glaciers receded and camps near them became larger. I'm not sure that larger group permits in the backcountry are healthy or necessary. Certainly not for adolescence groups, or if they go much greater restrictions on what is permitted to be taken in. A group of 10 in an Alpine meadow is a disaster in progress. I have been working in the Wilderness for the last 40 years. Starting with the Forest Service and now as a professional guide, my perspective of the changes occurring are coming from a resource that was large to a shrinking, limited resource. Given that, it needs stewards that are professional both in training and attitude. Weekend warriors, large hiking groups lead by individuals that are marginally trained have no place in the backcountry. The same is true of guiding rock in the park, I've been on more than a few rescues that were not necessary.

Comments: As you can imagine I have a more than a few thoughts about the limited access to the Park. It may seem that I am saying that only highly trained individuals that are deeply connected to the land and the protection of it should be allowed to guide in the Park. So let me qualify those remarks. I believe one of the Parks mandate is to provide access to visitors while at the same time protecting the resource. I have clients who would love to climb in the Park but don't because they want to climb with me. Why me? because we have climb together and there is an inheritant trust that is formed. A spoken and unspoken language translates into the ability to try something they may not be able to do with a stranger. Many many climbers only climb with people they know and trust, this is a relationship that is formed over years. The park makes it almost impossible for that interchange to take place. The Balancing point for the Park is how differentiate between those who can, and those who shouldn't when the ego is such a disabling check on reality. I for one would look to the AMGA in terms of qualifications of those who can and those who shouldn't, the skills are set at an international level and so exposure to the inevitable law suit becomes mitigated because the guide is effectively operating at a standard that is so far above the standard that a concessionaire may be operating unless all the guides of the concession are certified. So my thoughts are to set the bar high, keep large groups in specific corridors, keep schools honest with there program designs and stated needs, for god sake protect our parks!!!

I have spent years in wilderness, And it has taught me many things, and one of them is to step back and see what is happening on a much larger scale than just myself, I believe that the Park Service needs to do that as well. We are in the Sixth great extinction period of the earth, loosing species after species, the mandate of protecting for the future generations supersedes all consideration in regards to access. How does the Parks regulate the needs of those here now with the needs of future, I can't help but think that that mean less access. Or in the future we won't know what it is we have lost because we don't have an example of what it was.

The other massive change occurring is the globalization and climate change, both are effecting Yosemite and the need for stewards of land to be very thoughtful. I want future generations to have something to come to and I do not believe the current culture in the Valley to be conducive to that end. It will be hard and unpopular, but I do believe that to protect the Park there needs to be some effort to get into the Park. It should not be disneyland with a narrated driver telling the traveling consumers what they are seeing. At the same time I believe more films to describe the Park are needed. Its a razor edge.

We are in the mist of massive change, and it just needs some strength of character to promote the Park but at the same time limit access. The Parks needs outside stewards to help do this, it cannot dictate these needs, it never will, So I am urging the park to start limiting every joe that wants to guide and travel in the backcountry and embrace outside professionalism. Its the difference between having the right to be there and recognizing the privilege. Its a cultural change, its a possible mission change, it an evolutionary change in the thinking of the Park and what it is and for who.

All the Best

curtis green

Correspondence ID: 578 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 19:57:45
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the emphasis on preservation for future generations.

Topic Question 2:

Too many cars in the Valley. Close the Valley to traffic and put in an elevated electric train. Leave the existing roads for bicycles.

Comments: 1.The guiding system in place is a monopoly and does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with an AMGA certified guide.

2. AMGA Certified guides provide an invaluable opportunity for stewardship of the wilderness and training the public in wilderness preservation.

3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

4. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

5. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 579 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Please refer to the American Mountain Guides detailed letter included in the "Comments" section. Thank you.

Topic Question 2:

Please refer to the American Mountain Guides detailed letter included in the "Comments" section. Thank you.

Comments: January 28, 2016

Superintendent Don Neubacher
P.O.Box 577
Yosemite National Park
California 95389

RE: AMGA Scoping Comments for Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

The American Mountain Guides Association would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide public scoping comments on the Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship Plan (WSP, or the Plan). We are excited to be a partner and resource in the planning process, and look forward to supporting both the mountain guiding profession and Yosemite National Park. The AMGA believes strongly in the value of Wilderness-an enduring resource that has shaped the unique ethic and history of American mountain guiding.

About the AMGA

The American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that has been supporting mountain professionals for over 30 years. The AMGA inspires an exceptional client experience by being the premier source for training, credentials, resource stewardship and services for professional mountain guides and climbing instructors in the United States. The AMGA is an educational institution, an accrediting body, and a standard setting organization. The AMGA is our nations sole representative to the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA). The IFMGA is comprised of 25 member-countries and is the international governing body responsible for global guiding standards.

Since its genesis in 1979, the AMGA has grown to represent over 3,000 members that are represented in 49 states and 13 countries, over 30 Accredited Guide Services and educational institutions, and 60 Corporate Partners. Each year the training provided by the AMGA reaches over 700,000 people through direct contact between certified guides, climbing instructors, accredited programs, and their clients.

The AMGA provides education, training and certification in the disciplines of alpine climbing, rock climbing, and ski mountaineering. It also raises the standards of guide services and climbing schools with regard to safety, Leave No Trace practices, client care, education, and wilderness stewardship. The AMGA adheres to the strictest of standards that are rigidly enforced to ensure our certified guides, climbing instructors, and accredited programs are the nations preeminent experts on climbing and ski mountaineering best practices.

General Comments

As the AMGAs scope of practice is limited to mountain guide education and mountain guiding- be that rock, alpine, or skiing-the primary focus of our comments will be specific to these activities within Yosemite Wilderness.

Guiding has a long history within Yosemite National Park, primarily through the Yosemite Mountaineering School, a long-standing program run by the concessionaire. Many visitors have received incredible recreational and educational experiences with their guides over the decades the school has been in existence. However, the climbing and skiing industries are growing. For a variety of lifestyle reasons, more and more individuals interested in climbing and skiing are choosing to hire guides for education and mentorship. This ranges from millennials making the shift from indoor climbing gyms to outdoor climbing, to professionals with busy schedules, to diverse youth populations in search of facilitated wilderness experiences to broaden their horizons.

In the last several decades, how the guided public chooses to utilize the services of a guide has changed. Guides often build relationships with a core guest base and climb or ski with them in a variety of locations. Given the public land management landscape within the United States, this can be quite challenging. Guides will often be employed by several guide services or need to hold a spectrum of permits in order to operate legally and take their guests where they desire to visit.

The single concession model makes this quite a challenge for members of the public, both domestic and international, that wish to visit Yosemite to climb with a guide whom they know and trust. Presently, there are no opportunities to do so outside of the Yosemite Mountaineering School. The AMGA receives regular inquiries from foreign guides and the IFMGA itself as to the status of potential new visitation opportunities in Yosemite. In addition, the AMGA previously held a permit for providing rock guide training courses and exams in Yosemite, but in recent years has been prohibited from obtaining one, thus concentrating our terrain-specific training on other federal and state public lands.

Guiding in Wilderness

Wilderness has shaped the American guiding ethic, and is an essential fabric of its history. The AMGA is a proud supporter and proponent of Wilderness, and its continued conservation is essential to the health of our mountain areas. We believe that the publics access to Wilderness, both self-guided and guided, is essential to the appreciation of this uniquely American resource. We agree with land management agencies that overuse of the resource can degrade wilderness character, and thus support policies that provide a reasonable balance between continued access for all members of the public and conservation of our unique American heritage. Many National Parks have found a solid balance between access for the guided public and conservation- North Cascades, Rocky Mountain, and Joshua Tree, to name a few.

We support professionally trained commercial services as a Necessary and Appropriate tool for the realization of public purposes of Wilderness, and believe that professional guides are assets to our public lands, providing interpretation, education, and conservation opportunities to their guests. Not only do we believe that mountain guiding does not detract from Wilderness character, we believe it enhances it through the educational opportunities we have

with visitors in the mountains. For example, guides provide opportunities for diverse visitors to access their public lands—with the proliferation of climbing gyms across the country, many people utilize guides to receive the skills training necessary to begin climbing outside. Without that form of professional mentorship, they would not have the knowledge and skills to operate independently in a Wilderness climbing context, which demands a higher skill set and level of self-reliance. While some areas of the country have terrain outside of Wilderness in which to learn skills, many advanced skills are learned within the mountain terrain specifically protected by Wilderness.

We acknowledge the very significant volume of self-guided use received by the park, of which climbing and mountaineering is but a small fraction. We do not believe that climbing and mountaineering are at capacity in most areas of Yosemite Wilderness. Mechanisms should be put in place to allow a more diverse population of domestic and international visitors to access climbing in Yosemite. To this end the public purposes of Wilderness will be more fully realized when visitors are readily able to select a climbing guide to accompany them. Given the amount of inquiries the AMGA receives on this topic, we believe the demand to be significantly greater than what is currently being accommodated through the sole concessionaire program.

Professional Mountain Guides are Stewards of the Resource

Given that this process is a Stewardship Plan it would be remiss to not include the ways that professional guides benefit the Wilderness resource. First, professional guides in the American tradition know the value of Wilderness, and believe that its conservation is essential for the continuing health of both the land and the guiding profession. Second, mountain guides actively seek to minimize their impacts, be they physical or social. Utilizing and teaching Leave No Trace principals to their guests minimizes physical impacts. Proper planning and climbing route selection is done to minimize social impacts on the self-guided public while providing valuable experiences and education for guided visitors. For example, if Route A is known to be busy with self-guided climbers during the weekend, a guide would steer his guests to Route B to distribute use into other areas and minimize potential conflicts with other visitors. Third, guides provide mentorship to their guests on Wilderness topics ranging from why is there Wilderness? to enabling legislation, to ways their guests can support the priceless Wilderness resource. Lastly, guides and their guests can support park staff with conservation initiatives, such as trail work and cleanup days.

CUAs for Rock Climbing, Mountaineering, and Guide Education

The AMGA believes that new rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be permitted within Yosemite Wilderness, and that Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) would be the ideal mechanism for this. CUAs should be provided for both rock climbing and mountaineering. We believe that conforming to industry accepted best practices regarding guide credentialing and guide to client ratios is an excellent way to manage CUAs while minimizing social impacts. In the Half Dome Trail Determination of Extent Necessary, 10% of overall capacity was allocated to commercial users that provided for the formal educational public purpose of Wilderness. We believe a similar number could apply to rock climbing and mountaineering, as formal education occurs on almost every guided trip. Many organizations, including the AMGA, are also interested in operating formal climbing educational programs or courses in Yosemite. If, on a busy day, there were 2000 climbers in the park, a commercial allocation of 10% would be a negligible impact with guided parties dispersed throughout the 3000 climbing routes in Yosemite.

It is important to make the CUA process accessible for a range of independent guides, guides services, and organizations to access. We recommend a simple application process for CUAs that makes access dependent upon an appropriate level of guide qualifications. CUAs would ideally be granted for significant periods of time (e.g. ten or more days) with flexibility in scheduling to avoid any pressure to climb in sub-optimal weather or other conditions. CUAs for educational courses should be available for longer periods of time.

Many National Parks utilize zoning in Wilderness, and it is unclear whether this process will be used in Yosemite Wilderness. If so, we recommend allocating commercial use per zone, i.e., those zones with less self-guided use could potentially accommodate an increased percentage of guided use without displacing the former. This would serve to disperse use and reduce impacts.

The AMGA looks forward to working with park staff to develop reasonable measures that support park visitors, both self-guided and guided, and effectively protect the Wilderness resource.

Selection Criteria for Professional Guides

The guided public today is increasingly demanding the most skilled professionally trained mountain guides available. We believe it is necessary for visitor and resource protection that a high standard of training and professionalism be a significant selection factor in the CUA application process. Given that we are discussing two distinct terrain-specific permit options, we would like to offer our suggestions on potential selection criteria.

Guided Rock Climbing: The walls of Yosemite run the gamut from single-pitch terrain to multi-day Grade V and VI big-wall climbing. Our recommendation is that guides be certified by the AMGA as a Rock Guide, meaning that they have been trained and assessed on terrain up to Grade V 5.10, or that they are certified as an IFMGA (International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations) Mountain Guide. Mountain Guides certified by the AMGA hold an internationally recognized certification in rock climbing, alpine climbing, and ski mountaineering guiding. Foreign IFMGA Mountain Guides are recognized as having equivalent training, and many nations offer full reciprocity to IFMGA Mountain Guides from other countries.

Guided Mountaineering / Alpine Climbing: Similar to the rock terrain, the mountain terrain within Yosemite Wilderness bridges the spectrum from hiking peaks to technical 4th and 5th class mountain routes with complicated approaches and descents. Our recommendation is that guides applying for a mountaineering CUA be certified by the AMGA as an Alpine Guide or be certified as an IFMGA Mountain Guide. Similarly to the Rock Guide, the Alpine Guide is trained in a variety of mountain terrain, and assessed on advanced technical terrain.

Safety and Leave No Trace: All AMGA Guides have extensive training in client safety and rescue techniques. To become certified, AMGA Guides are required to obtain Wilderness First Responder, equivalent, or better certification and AMGA believes they should maintain this to operate in Yosemite. All AMGA Guides are introduced to Leave No Trace principals and integrate these principals into their profession. In addition, many AMGA Guides are formally certified in Leave No Trace and AMGA would be supportive if Yosemite chose to make this certification an expectation for guides.

The AMGA believes that these criteria will benefit the visitor, the park, and the resource by allowing only the most highly trained professional mountain guides to provide services in the Park. An additional benefit to Yosemite Commercial Services is the knowledge that these credentials signify a quantifiable level of skill and professionalism, thus providing an important vetting tool for CUA applicants. Several other public lands require professional credentials to obtain commercial guiding permits—the NPS units are listed below. The AMGA is also happy to provide a complete list of all public land units in the U.S. that require professional credentials. Note: all NPS units allow for equivalent credentialing at the discretion of the park.

1. DENA: AMGA business accreditation - CUA
2. SEKI: AMGA Alpine Guide/IFMGA Mountain Guide or AMGA Ski Guide/IFMGA Mountain Guide for mountaineering and backcountry ski touring CUAs, respectively
3. C&O Canal/Great Falls National Parks: professional training/certification by AMGA or several other organizations at Single Pitch Instructor level - CUA
4. MORA: AMGA Alpine Guide/IFMGA Mountain Guide - Single Trip CUA
5. JOTR: trip leader certified by AMGA, or business accredited by AMGA - CUA
6. DETO: AMGA certification - CUA
7. NERI: guides certified by AMGA at Single Pitch Instructor or higher, or business accredited by AMGA - CUA

In addition, the following National Parks are very supportive of mountain guiding in Wilderness.

1. NOCA: many operators have CUAs and capacity is managed through the same overnight backcountry permits and zoning as the self-guided public.
2. ROMO: for 2016 moved away from the single mountain guiding concession to having six concessions as well as limited CUAs, for which AMGA training/certification is a strong selection criteria.

Additional Comments

While the AMGAs specific focus is mountain guiding and commercial use, we support reasonable policies that allow access for both the guided public and self-guided public to our wild lands. We are climbers, skiers, and mountaineers. We partner closely with the Access Fund on climbing access issues that affect the climbing public at large, and support their comments regarding the wider scope of climbing management in Yosemite Wilderness.

Conclusion

The AMGA would like to thank the staff of Yosemite National Park for their service to this amazing landscape and its visitors, and for the opportunity to provide our thoughts on the significant opportunities offered by this planning process. We are happy to provide further information on our training programs or any aspect of guiding within our scope. We look forward to serving as a resource to park staff, visitors to Yosemite, and ultimately the incredible Wilderness landscape itself.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 580 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 20:51:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

- The trail system is well-maintained, covers a great deal of the park while allowing for plenty of off-trail, remote places, and has many access points.
- Multiple wilderness permit locations throughout the park.
- Strong education component to the permit system
- The wilderness rangers are highly knowledgeable. I like that the rangers in the wilderness center split time between patrols and time in the centers so that they don't get burnt out and have first-hand knowledge about the places they will talk about with people.

Topic Question 2:

The High Sierra Camps and associated campgrounds are easily the most important issue facing Yosemite Wilderness. With the popularity of Yosemite Wilderness, it can now be argued that commercial services are no longer necessary, in accordance with the letter of the law. Even if they were not a violation of this Wilderness Act provision, the High Sierra Camps are highly divisive. They diminish opportunities for solitude via invasive mule trains and increase numbers beyond the trail quotas, and concentrate use into heavily populated pockets. They diminish the natural quality of meadow systems by creating braided trails and adversely affecting the biodiversity of that fragile environment. They take away from the undeveloped character of wilderness by having permanent structures that dominate viewsheds far and near, that affect the local ecology, and that serve as magnets for the underprepared and underconfident looking for a safety net of infrastructure. Furthermore, the commonly held belief that the High Sierra Camps give people who wouldn't otherwise be able to hike the opportunity is patently false. High Sierra Camp users, by nature of the cost of admission, are the richest demographic of visitors in the park. Those folks can afford to find alternatives, such as hiring guided pack outfitters to take them horse packing or to take advantage of hut systems in other wild places. I believe Yosemite should remove all High Sierra Camps and associated campgrounds immediately.

The reservation system and wilderness centers seem to have been outsized by demand. The staff are often overwhelmed by the sheer numbers and it can be very challenging for visitors to have enough quality time with staff to learn and ask questions via phone. Waits in visitor centers are often over an hour. Getting a reservation for a popular trailhead is nearly impossible, with everyone racing to get it in at the right moment. Consider more of a lottery for popular trails, like the John Muir Trail. Consider hiring more staff.

Another issue facing Yosemite Wilderness is its ability to stay relevant to the changing demographics of California and the U.S.-at-large. Wilderness is still an overwhelmingly white and upper/middle-class playground. Yosemite must continue its efforts to reach out to people of color and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, especially those who live close to the park. Yosemite has taken radical steps in this direction by pioneering two highly successful and widely respected programs: WildLink and the Yosemite Leadership Program at UC Merced. These two programs are unparalleled across the country and are proven pathways for young people to engage in Wilderness in meaningful ways, including professional employment with the National Park Service. Both programs should continue to be supported and funded robustly by the National Park Service.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 581 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 21:10:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value opportunities to not only access the National Parks but also opportunities to learn about safe and sustainable means and techniques from professionals such as guides.

Topic Question 2:

Rock climbing in Yosemite is not at capacity and should therefore still be offered to members of the public in a safe and educational format as presented by trained and certified professional guides.

Comments: As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 582 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 21:10:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: To whom it may concern;

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public input into the new Wilderness Stewardship plan for Yosemite National Park. Yosemite is a special place, for me and many others, and I am glad my voice can be heard and may make a difference in the future of the park. I also believe that Yosemite is a flagship for the NPS and that decisions made here will impact the future of parks across the United States.

Of most importance to me is the future of guiding in the park. As an aspiring AMGA guide, I hope to use the park professionally as well as for recreation.

I believe in the value of wilderness and feel that most talented guides are also the best stewards of the environment in which they ply their craft. Guides are stewards in two ways. For one, knowledge and expertise in craft and environment allow them to move people through the wilderness efficiently and quietly, thereby minimizing the impact each person has on the land. Also, a natural incentive exists for the guide to maintain her environment, returning it to a state equal to or better than when she last traveled through it. Not only does that result in a financial "reward" for a guide, but being a steward increases the client's appreciation for the environment as well.

The current state of the permitting process in Yosemite NP does not provide enough diversity for visitors wishing to enjoy the park with a guide. Competition is vital for a healthy guiding industry, as it forces operators to employ best practices, both at the level of the individual guide (training standards) and at an operational level (LNT, minimal impact). As well, guiding is at its core a personal relationship-based enterprise, and giving individual guides the opportunity to bring their own clients, further enhances the likelihood of a smooth, low-impact trip in the wilderness.

The solution is to offer a limited amount of low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations. These should be reasonable to obtain for both business and sole proprietors certified as Rock, Alpine, or Mountain guides through the American Mountain Guide Association. This high standard is published and can be used to hold guides accountable for their decisions in the mountains of Yosemite. As well, it ensures competition does not result in "cut-rate" guiding opportunities for visitors.

The guiding industry has undergone massive changes since the last Wilderness Stewardship Plan, and the new one should reflect this. I believe that the above is a viable option that maintains both a commitment to wilderness and low-impact while providing more choice for consumers, and creating a robust "guiding economy".

Thank you for your consideration and for allowing my voice in this discussion.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 583 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Public Transportation and curtailment of invasive tourism

Topic Question 2:

Over use. Limited and supervised access to the wilderness via permits and registration.

Comments: to enable interested visitors access to the backcountry, especially more mature visitors like myself, mule packers offer a valuable and much appreciated service. I would like very much for this to continue.

Correspondence ID: 584 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 21:31:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have for several years inquired about guide services pertaining to climbing in the park. Most information I have received is from persons with dubious qualifications. There is a guide service but not for the big walls or routes that challenge the veteran climbers. See my statement below in the Comments section.

Topic Question 2:

Please see my Comment below.

Comments: To the National Park Service;

I thank you for the duties your service provides; I am a senior citizen and have visited, hiked, climbed, and enjoyed the beauty of many of our wonderful National Parks. Unfortunately I have not visited Yosemite but I hold Yo in my heart as the special place where rock climbing reached its zenith. I have planned to climb there as part of my bucket list places to visit, but I digress let me state my peace about guiding in Yosemite as well in all of our national parks.

I have climbed with professional guides in the France, Grand Tetons, Rocky Mountain National Park, New Hampshire and closer to home in North Carolina. Some years ago I was in France on business and was given the opportunity to visit Paris. As intriguing as such a beautiful city seemed I really was drawn to Chamonix to climb in the place of alpinism. I called a few local guide services but it was the time of year when most were guiding clients in other parts of the world. Finally I talked to Sebastian Laurent an IFMGA guide and he became my first mountain guide that I hired. Sebastian and I climbed a five pitch line in Chamonix and had a great time. Sebastian was extremely safety conscious, took me to meet other guides and their families in the village, told me about the history of the village, and we had a celebratory drink in his chateau after our successful climb. Why do I tell you this is because Sebastian was extremely proud of his IFMGA certification, two, I learned that in Europe guides are treated as professionals as they should be and finally it wasn't all about the climb it was about locale, about the people, and about having a wonderful experience.

The next year I wanted to climb a route in the Tetons, but I most friends my age do not climb or can't due to physical limitations, so I was going to attempt the route solo. When I reached the park my, whom I was talking with on the phone, was very upset with me about climbing an alpine route solo. I asked if I hired a guide would he be ok with that to which he was fine but maybe a little reluctant. I called a local guide company that has park permits and hired Ben Gilmore an AMGA mountain guide. I have never met a more professional person in my life. I cannot say enough about Ben, he is first and foremost a competent guide with years of backcountry climbing experience. That trip we climbed the NE couloir of Middle Teton. Subsequently I hired Ben to climb in New Hampshire and one other trip to the Tetons. Without a professional guide available I would never had the opportunity to climb the routes that Ben guided me.

Locally, southeast US, I had several bucket list climbs I wanted to check off. Due to some problems I had on a climb years ago I met Adam Fox owner of Fox Mountain Guides in Asheville, NC. Through FMG I met Ron Funderburke AMGA rock guide and we climbed many routes, one in particular that I had nearly bought the farm on a few years before. Ron and I established a route on Laurel Knob that as I know it no one has ever repeated. Ron is my go to guide here in the southeast but unfortunately he has moved on. Ron is truly a wonderful guide and friend. He provided portage to a trailhead in Linville Gorge for a partner and I to have a great adventure. As Ron said once I think up a route to do and he leads us.

Why am I telling dear reader about these guys? They are professional and do it not just to provide a livelihood but also because they love the wilderness experience and sharing it with their clients. AMGA and the IFMGA are both client oriented, safety oriented, wilderness protection and utmost professional. Please consider opening up the licensing to guide services in Yosemite. I look forward in the near future to climbing the big walls of El Cap and Half Dome in the park with a professional and competent guide.

Thanks for your consideration and your time.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 585 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 21:32:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS has reasonable means for permitting and being aware of the number and location of users in the wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Access and acceptance of climbing within the NP is very important. Rock climbing should be more accepted by the park service as a viable means to experience and interact with the landscape. The current expression from the NPS is that climbing is tolerated not promoted. this should change.

Comments: Certified guides should be allowed easier access to rock and mountain guiding permits. Certified guides are trained in proper wilderness behavior and should be promoted as one of the best ways for people to experience the outdoors.

Correspondence ID: 586 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 21:45:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the educational programs and access to both the valley and the high Sierra camps. There are guidelines in place to keep the environment safe, as well as encouraging exploration.

Topic Question 2:

Access to the High Sierra Camps seems to be threatened. These camps encourage people to leave the Valley floor and experience nature in new ways. The Ranger led hikes not only educate backpackers, but help encourage conservancy.

Traffic seems to be a problem, other parks use mass transit in certain areas, or at certain times of year to decrease this problem. Yosemite seems to already have a good foundation for such a program.

Comments: I completed a 5 day, Ranger Naturalist hike this past summer. It was my first backpack trip, and I would not have taken on such an adventure without the high camps. I have visited Yosemite many times with family and friends, hiked Half Dome, cross country skied but never attempted backpacking. Knowing that I had a dry warm bed each night, as well as food, made the trip possible. My group consisted of 12 people aged 24-64, and we met a woman, 82 years old, hiking between camps. Of our group, only 2 people had gone backpacking before, and they were taking their daughter out for her first backpack trip. Six people were admittedly city folks, having only hiked in neighborhoods. It would be a shame to limit access to our wilderness by closing the high camps. Each of us left that trip knowing more about the ecology and history of Yosemite. My partner and I read John Muir's My First Summer in the the Sierras, because we wanted to keep the memories close.

Correspondence ID: 587 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Protecting the Park while providing access to various user groups is important to me. That said, limiting the access of the climbing public is an issue I feel

the NPS could improve upon. Yes, the climbing public has the access but many more do not have the requisite skill set to safely climb in YNP. While these climbers would love to explore and climb in the Park, their options for seeking instruction and/or a guide are limited. While I appreciate what the NPS does to protect the land and provide access to all visitors, I would encourage the NPS to explore expanding the access to climbers who are looking for a guide, or THEIR own personal guide from somewhere else, to help them not only reach personal goals but learn to appreciate and love Yosemite. We will only protect what we love and Yosemite, as well as all our National Parks, are special places that deserve to be protected for all generations to come.

Topic Question 2:

With a society increasingly reliant on technology, more and more of the public is detached from the wild places the NPS protects. No one should diminish the freedom and the "do it yourself" approach Americans have always enjoyed when recreating in these places. But, at the same time, more people are seeking instruction to learn how to safely enjoy these wild places on their own. And the most trained and qualified guides in the country (and the world) are found in the American Mountain Guide Association's ranks. These guides became guides because they love to climb or ski, of course, but also because they love the land, the wild places, and protecting these places is their passion. They are trained to be stewards of the land early on in the AMGA programs and through organizations like the Access Fund, Leave No Trace and the American Alpine Club. Most AMGA-trained guides are people who invest back into their climbing community by investing themselves in trail building/maintenance projects, often working closely with NPS staff. When considering options for CUA and commercial access, YNP should consider guides with AMGA/IFMGA certification first because they adhere to the highest standards of safety and stewardship. This, in turn, not only provides a higher degree of safety for the public that hires these guides but subsequently passes on that passion and love for the wilderness that no amount of technology can do. Guides offer life-changing experiences, a totally unique perspective that disconnects people from electricity and reconnects them to the Earth.

Comments: For better or worse, what happens in Yosemite for commercial guiding creates a landmark approach for other national parks. At this point, YNP has the opportunity to lead the way in creating more access for the country's, and the world's, best guides to share their craft with the climbing public. Access should be granted on skill, training, education...just like any other industry like medicine or law: to practice their craft, these professionals have to adhere to a professional and regulated standard, continue their education and maintain a high level of competence. Why would we not grant access to all the professionals who've dedicated their lives to the mountain guiding craft? Why limit that access to those who've simply been around for a while? Guides that are AMGA/IFMGA trained/certified and guide services that are AMGA accredited should be a resource that the NPS seeks out when thinking about protecting their lands. Access should not be precedent-based, it should be credential-based. The most qualified individuals and services take the time, and often their own money, to seek out training in the highest standards and not because anyone requires it. No one requires it. But they do it because it's the best practice, it's the industry standard and it's the right thing to do.

Correspondence ID: 588 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Promoting and protecting the park.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues I feel is access for recreational and commercial users. With the increase in interest, we need to find a way to allow more access. The public needs to be able to access more of the terrain and they should be able to do so with supervision if they want. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. Guiding is so underused in YNP - as it was in others. Luckily many other parks have expanded the opportunities to guides and guide services through opening up more permit and CUA's. Please consider allowing more guiding opportunities to those with the proper training and certification such as AMGA Rock Instructor, Rock Guide, and Alpine Guide certifications along with the proper wilderness first aid skills.

Comments: I would like to see increased capacity for recreational climbers as well as guides. Looking into the value and uniqueness the park has to climbing and considering opening up more camping possibilities to climbers - increasing the areas to camp, as well as the duration allowed. A fair amount of time is required for climbers to get use to the area, train, and become familiar with its style to allow them to move on to the big objectives possible there. Extending the camping limit would help that.

Also, I would like you to consider expanding the opportunities to trained guides as many other National Parks have recently done. Having a concession limited to one service limits the opportunities to the public as well as the guides who make their living from it. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA, and modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource. Look at RMNP, Mount Rainier, and Denali for instance. They all increased rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities and made them available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

I've been a guide for 24 years and have had the great fortune to have some of the same clients for most of that time. They know me and I know them. When they go climbing, they want to be with someone they have an existing relationship with and can trust. Please consider more access for credential based access - guides who are have been trained and undergone an examination, that way you can be sure they proved they provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill. They will serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Seek credentials such as AMGA Accredited Guide Services and also individual guides who are certified as AMGA Rock Instructor, AMGA Rock Guide, or AMGA Alpine Guide, as well as the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my thoughts and taking the time to listen.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 589 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 21:57:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the stewardship and careful consideration for preservation. I appreciate the challenge of balancing visitors, concessions, and preservation. I think that Yosemite is a rare and profound place that has the power to change people's lives and inspire a love for the natural world. Will a footprint by an

inspired human negate the ability of the next to be inspired in the same way?

Topic Question 2:

People cause all conflict. There are many many people visiting Yosemite. Some need to be educated in leave no trace principles. And all of the people need amenities: trails, food, camping or shelter, showers, and more which have a cost to the "wilderness".

Comments: I am an American Mountain Guide Association trained IFMGA guide. I now live in Canada and benefit from a different park system. In Canada, we can only guide if we are certified. This process is rigorous and leads us to the highest standards in leave no trace, hazard mitigation, and knowledge of terrain. Guides in many parts of the world become certified and can guide anywhere. This system allows guests to choose the guide that they feel most comfortable with. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

One way to achieve access for guides could be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Thank you for your time,

Correspondence ID: 590 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 21:58:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate the commitment the National Park Service shows to keeping such a unique landscape as wild as possible despite vast visitation and use.

Topic Question 2:

As use continues to grow, it is important to enhance public stewardship for the land. The best way to do this is to reshape the culture of outdoor recreation through education.

Comments: I am writing to state my opinion on the inclusion of a more open commercial landscape in Yosemite. As the new Stewardship Plan is decided upon, I think it is important to note that there is an opportunity here to lay the groundwork for more sustainable use in the park, and allowing AMGA certified guides to operate via Commercial Use Authorization permits in Yosemite will only increase the level of stewardship, safety, and awareness of the general public. AMGA climbing guides are highly trained and motivated professionals with the stewardship of the land, and the safety and enjoyment of the public-their clients- at heart. Currently, the system doesn't provide proper access for guides and guide services. It is my opinion that AMGA certified guides should be able to obtain permits for guiding at a reasonable cost, so as to include all proprietors who are properly certified. I don't see a down-side in enhancing commercial use for AMGA certified guides. Guides are an educational and positive public service to outdoor recreationalists, especially in climbing, which involves highly technical knowledge in order to be practiced safely-knowledge of which guides are trained to both provide, as well as practice at the highest level of safety. Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 591 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 22:21:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I visited Yosemite several years ago and was very impressed by the Park Services. I was in a snow storm on the way to the valley. The park rangers made it possible to keep stranded visitors safe and informed about the situation. The Park Services were my ultimate resource to learn about the park, trail conditions, weather, activities, etc.

As a visitor, I value most safety, educational opportunities and access to diverse activities while visiting the Park. The Parks has a lot to offer and the Park Services have done fantastic job educating visitors about their options.

Topic Question 2:

I am a rock climber and a mountaineer. I have climbed extensively in the US and overseas, almost always with a professional guiding service. I truly believe that a reputable guiding service familiar with the local terrain, weather patterns and park rules can provide a very safe, educational and fun experience for the National Park visitors. A couple of years ago I researched opportunities to climb in Yosemite. I was surprised to learn that only one guiding service was permitted to climb in Yosemite. I do not believe that a monopoly is in the best interests of public. I think that expanding access to select well qualified guiding services would allow the Park to remain in charge of climbing activities while promoting additional opportunities to visitors. The Mt. Rainier NP could be a case study from switching from a monopoly to several reputable guiding services. I think Yosemite could develop specific selection criteria for additional guiding services.

Comments: Could I suggest to make trail signs more visible? I remember that they were made of weathered metal and blended in nicely. I was hiking up to Half Dome. While I was admiring the trail signs for their design, I thought that they were almost impossible to see at dusk or darkness. In fact, I missed a couple during the day time.

Correspondence ID: 592 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am appreciative of the fact that free access has been maintained, within the boundaries of a fair permitting system. As a climber, I value the ability to change plans and have free reign to decide on objectives and change plans for myself on a day out in the park.

Topic Question 2:

As a climber and guide, the hardest issues for me are limited camping in low impact zones (such as camp 4 and the seasonal quota system) and the monopoly on guiding in the park that makes it nearly impossible to bring my clients in to enjoy one of the most iconic and rewarding rock climbing destinations in the world.

I would like to see an expanded permitting system, that allows certified individuals and small guide services to bring clients to Yosemite and help offer the services that are desired by our clients but currently impossible for us to provide.

Comments: I believe that increasing the guiding opportunities can and will help to create a better culture among climbers and visitors in the park. More often than not, guests that finish a guided outing leave with a deeper understanding and appreciation of being a steward of the land, practicing LNT and being part of a responsible and courteous climbing community. I also believe that additional permitting will not necessarily overcrowd existing popular routes, due to the fact that the nature of climbing in the valley is best experienced by advanced climbers that already express interest in bringing in their own guides that they have relationships with in order to guide them up longer and harder objectives, these do not have crowding issues.

Correspondence ID: 593 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 22:33:49

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The US National Parks are an amazing resource. Since I live in Colorado, most of my experience has been in Rocky Mountain National Park, where I often enjoy working as a professional mountain guide with Colorado Mountain School. The guides and the park service have a great relationship that is continuing to improve, as we work together to help the public get the most out of their experience in the Rocky Mountains.

Topic Question 2:

Rock climbing guiding access is an important issue that I think should be addressed in the new version of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan. Yosemite is the crown jewel of climbing in the United States, if not the world; yet for years, rock climbing guiding in this amazing place has been treated as a commodity. When a member of the public would like to climb with a guide in the park, they are forced to choose from an extremely limited number of guides, who are essentially corporate employees.

Mountain guiding in the US is not what it was twenty years ago. As an AMGA Certified Rock and Alpine Guide, I have invested years of training, practice, and testing in my profession. I have traveled all over the country with my clients, helping them to grow as climbers, and teaching them to do it safely, as well as responsibly with respect to the wilderness we travel in. The peers with whom I work share these values, as do the guide companies that many of us work for.

I have had many clients who dream of climbing Yosemite, and I dream of being able to take them there. I hope that in the upcoming revision of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan, you consider making available additional opportunities for rock climbing and mountaineering guiding in the park, in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. Further, it is my belief that the AMGA Rock Guide, AMGA Alpine Guide, and IFMGA Mountain Guide credentials should be used as selection criteria for these CUAs, as they provide the highest quantifiable assessment of a guide's quality, skill and professionalism.

Sincerely,

PS - I write this from Pemberton, British Columbia, after a twelve hour day of ski guide training. I am on day three out of ten, on the AMGA Advanced Ski Mountaineering Guide Course. This is very important to us...

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 594 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 22:43:09

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have not visited yosemite but I like that you create honeypot areas to focus most visitors to certain areas whilst leaving large areas to explore either on your own or with a guide if experience is lacking.

Topic Question 2:

Access needs to be available for all people to access the wilderness and experience would places safely and enjoy the parks that we are lucky to have. Currently one guide service is not enough. I work as a climbing guide and have a large client base. A lot of those clients would love to access the wilderness with me. Alas despite being American Mountain Guide Association certified rock guide I am not allowed to bring my clients to the park.

Comments: I work as a Rick and alpine guide and would love to bring my clients into the park. Through the years clients and guides develop trust and partnerships that are deep and special. I have clients that would love to have me travel all over our public lands but would not be willing to try with a guide that they do not know. I feel out is time to look towards Europe Canada and new Zealand and stay offering credential based access. If someone is a certified rock guide let them guide rock. If certified alpine let them guide the alpine. The American Mountain Guide Association is theory organization in the country that has been checked by an independent 3rd party so they should be the only ones allowed to guide in the parks. We would not Let a surgeon operate with out board certification, or lawyer with out the bar. So let's start opening or public land to trained and certified guides.

Correspondence ID: 595 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 22:45:17

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think they are doing a great job. The park is very well maintained. I love how clean the park is and there are various locations for trash.

Topic Question 2:

I think the big issue too many visitors in the summer months. Visitors disturbing wild life and not packing out their trash. There should be more signs letting people know where trash can be thrown and not to disturb the wild life. More choices for lodging would be nice.

Comments: I love the park and hope many generations to come can enjoy it.

Correspondence ID: 596 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the NPS allowing climbers to recreate relatively unmanaged and place fixed protection as necessary by hand in Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue is managing the number of vehicles in Yosemite. Get them out! Look at the system in place in Zion. It works, and is simple and greatly reduces impact on the landscape.

Comments: There is plenty of room to expand commercial guiding (climbing) services in Yosemite, especially for individual guides, rather than concession style larger services. Professional guides, trained by organizations such as the AMGA and other IFMGA organizations, have the highest level of training, which is beneficial to the public in terms of safety and regard for the wilderness. A trained guide treats the wilderness with respect, and instills that value in their clients.

Guides are well equipped to seek out less crowded routes, which will help spread people out. This doesn't equate to more impact, rather, reduces impact, both visually and environmentally. Guides will help keep people on existing approach and descent trails, not only their clients, but modelling for the public as well. Guides are vested in the land, and help with clean up and maintenance of trails, routes, and anchors.

Training should be highly valued in considering guiding opportunities. Currently, guides only need to be trained in first aid (WFR) and CPR. This means they are trained for when things go wrong. The alternative is that the NPS requires training in the profession, ie, as an AMGA Rock Guide, Alpine Guide, or IFMGA Mountain Guide. This training is focused on the actual guiding and protecting the clients and guide.

Correspondence ID: 597 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 00:28:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am grateful for the climbing rangers and for YOSAR rescue capabilities, and for a reasonable approach to bolting in the valley.

Topic Question 2:

As an emblem of the National Park system, Yosemite represents our aspiration as a society to live in balance with nature, and to continue valuing nature despite becoming largely urban society. How we manage the park reflects on that aspiration, and on how seriously we hold to it. Specifically, the wilderness portion of the park embodies these ideas, but the public experience in the main Yosemite corridor does not do a good job of connecting the visitor to the idea, meaning and potential of wilderness, and misses an important opportunity to do so.

Comments: More than ever, the American public and the world is in need of wilderness and all that it has to offer. In the review of park management policy, I urge to give lengthy consideration to the role played by guides and educators working in the park wilderness. Our long-standing conception of commercial activity on these lands as a necessary evil is outdated and unhelpful to our stated goals. Professional guides trained to work in specific terrain - be it mountain climbing, rock climbing, or white water rafting - offer a crucial resource to the public. Every day they inspire thousands to value nature, to value wilderness, and to explore the values enshrined in the Park system and in the Wilderness Act. In closing, please consider an idea that changed my own view of commercial activity greatly: if the public has a right to visit its lands, then it ought to have the right to do so with the help of a skilled professional of their choosing; the result will be a healthier outdoor economy, a society that better values its precious lands, and a park that functions more healthfully, with the support of the guides and educators who want to take part in continuing our wildland legacy. Thanks for your time.

Correspondence ID: 598 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 00:53:57

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have long enjoyed Yosemite. My dad brought the family; my husband and I brought our family several times. We have hiked, biked, camped, and enjoyed the glorious scenery and wildlife - photographing, sketching, breathing the fresh air. Friends have shared their 50 th anniversary with us in Yosemite, the site of their honeymoon. We were active in Parks and Rec in Marin County and well appreciate the value of nature in every day living.

It is thanks to the National Park Service that we have been able to enjoy these beautiful activities in fabulous settings. The Park Service has helped maintain the land and preserve it. I appreciate the curbing of auto traffic, increase in shuttle services, and signage that assists all of us for hiking, picnicking, and camping.

Topic Question 2:

The High Sierra Camps make it possible for the novice to moderate hiker to enjoy the mountains while lessening the impact of we humans on the high altitude areas. Rangers are most valuable guides on the High Sierra guided hikes, educating us all and making the sights more meaningful by sharing knowledge about the early peoples who earlier lived on the land. We learn of their customs and their respect for the flora and fauna of the area. Rangers Dave and Adriana were most wonderful guides and model stewards of the land guiding our family High Sierra hike a few years ago.

By provided the education, lodging, and food for these hikes, the Park Service helps preserve the wilderness while allowing restricted numbers of people to those sites to minimize damage to the surroundings. Past and present users / lovers of the wilderness spread the words and values of the earlier peoples and our rangers of the Park Service thereby promoting and helping to guarantee the preservation of this beautiful land.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 599 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:57:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think that the National Park service does a great job in the stewardship of the Yosemite Wilderness.

This is a massive and complex task which has multiple facets, including:

- 1.Designation and protection of "wilderness" areas
- 2.Species protection
- 3.Grazing management for the animals
- 4.Water resource management
- 5.Fire management
- 6.Insect and disease control
- 7.Overseeing scientific research
- 8.Managing the impact of tourism/ recreation in the national park.

Topic Question 2:

Aspects of all 8 points above.

However, in particular the impact of tourism and recreational visitors to the park.

On the one hand unregulated access has the potential to exacerbate many of the problems in maintaining the national park.

However, managed recreation with the national park acting as a supervisor has a lot of positives:

Firstly, the park fees accrued can contribute to addressing the 8 major points mentioned above.

Also, I think that additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low ratio commercial use authorisations (CUA's) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

However, the highest professional terrain specific credentials should be applied as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA.

I think acceptable criteria include AMGA rock guide, AMGA alpine guide, IFMGA mountain guide.

These guides can act as ambassadors for the conservation values of the national park, as well as maintaining a high degree of professionalism and safety.

Comments: I am a professional with significant work and family commitments.

However, I am also a climber who is passionate above the outdoors and conservation.

I climb mainly unguided on crags in my own country. However, I am aware of my limitations in a new country and environment.

These are largely governed by time (annual leave!) but also by the logistics of traveling with a family and finding a reliable climbing partner, route selection and finding, equipment/gear transport etc.

By hiring a fully qualified guide I can safely and effectively climb a major route in the national park in a tight timeframe and take my family with me.

Maintaining a high standard of guiding qualifications is essential but allowing different operators in the national park- all under the stewardship of the national park governors, will create competition which in turn will drive standards, safety and ensure that an objective viewpoint is maintained with regard to conserving the valley.

Correspondence ID: 600 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 01:22:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

That everyone has equal chance to access the wonders and gems of Yosemite National Park.

Topic Question 2:

Do not know.

Comments: Good guiding companies have a high level of education, training and expectations for their guides; therefore, will have a lesser impact than non-commercial parties. Having commercial guide operators in remote areas especially, increases the safety of visitors and the environmental protection. Guides often are stewards of the park and educate visitors protect the park. Reputable guiding companies carrying satellite phones, elaborate first aid kits, and their level of First Aid training (WFR minimum) makes the park a safer place. Hikes can get helped by those guides, in case of emergency, or even just to improve their experience by the ability to ask questions to someone of knowledge. Guides are able to contact the Park if they find private parties in need of assistance beyond the guides' capabilities, such as, major injury or illness, illegal activity, or for a variety of other reasons.

Guided visitors are able to witness first-hand how guides care for this magical and unique place, how important it is to respect and get involved for its protection. Guided guests also become 'hike smart' educated and spread, themselves, the good word around campgrounds, on the trails, but also back home after their trip, to their friends and family who are considering the adventure. They go home with a new intimate connection with nature, a better sense of the value of those unspoiled areas, and a higher level of awareness of how those special places need our help for their protection.

The park, and quality, caring guide organizations, should work together. They will each have different ways of looking at things, which together would likely be much more effective than separate. The park needs them, and they need the park. They have a symbiotic relationship, they just need to help the park to understand how much they care, and how much impact they have on general public coming to visit. The fact that guided companies pamper guests on their trips really increases the diversity of guests that will then be willing to take part in such adventures as backpacking. Guiding companies are reaching a wider range of the public that would never do this without a guide service, and helping to get them in to the wilderness so they can, maybe for the first time in their lives, connect with nature. Once you help someone connect with nature, especially in wild, remote places, they will start to understand themselves the need to protect and enjoy nature. After all, Mother Earth is what supports and sustains the world of mankind.

For guides, this is more than a job, it has become a way to educate the public of the need to protect and enjoy Mother Earth.

The vast majority of guided guests would not do this without a guide service. This means guides are getting people in here that would never come alone. Then those people, of whom most are very successful in the business world, will walk away with a deeper understanding of the importance to contribute to, to protect, and to enjoy, Nature. They will then tell friends and family about their experiences, and many of them will come to hike with guided services. It is like a good virus, it should be spread across the world as quickly as possible. We want to infect people with a deeper understanding and connection to the natural world. The people who will themselves go on multi-day adventures into the Wilderness likely already understand the need to protect and enjoy Nature.

Limiting guided services would push unprepared novice hikers to try to do it by themselves, and get into trouble. Not only will not recognizing that inexperienced hikers will continue to stream into the backcountry thus increasing risk and safety related management responses/practices, it will negatively impact hikers who will miss out on the exposure of a life empowering activity and only increase the burden on Park Service staff. Regulating the backcountry to only those who have the time to get experience and gear will negatively affect the NPS by lessening the amount of potential and/or future Park advocates due to lacking support by NPS to keep safe access open to the public by being able to educate all hikers, entirely limiting the opportunity to further awareness about endangered landscapes locally and in the world as whole. Ultimately, limiting awareness, by limiting experiences of hikers, because the money for the infrastructure and backcountry staff does not trickle down to the NPS, will further erode NPS support, not nurture it. Working together, commercial guide services can be a relationship to ease some of the risk management responses (saving the Park money) needed on the ground, provide education for novice and new - to - the - area hikers for the trip they are on and any future trips they undertake in their lifetime, and facilitate life empowering experiences that will foster continued support for Yosemite specifically and the NPS at large.

Guided visitors should have the same chances as un-guided visitors to get on Yosemite trails. For day hikes out of the valley, remote backpacking trips, and everything in between. Any limit to guiding services would be discrimination for the visitors who need that support.

Correspondence ID: 601 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The Yosemite wilderness is a fantastic place that allows us to get out into nature in a truly remote location.

Topic Question 2:

Day by day as the world population grows, and wilderness areas shrink, the wilderness experience becomes more and more precious. The backcountry should be treated as a special place to experience nature as it has evolved over millions of years. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

Advantages of using guides includes teaching principles of leave not trace. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

To help safely bring park visitors to the backcountry, additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering), and international equivalents.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 602 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 04:36:16
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
They balance the need for trails to access the Yosemite Wilderness with leaving the Wilderness wild and as little impacted by people as possible. It is a location where I can escape from everyday life and surround myself in nature.

Topic Question 2:

Please see my comments below - but I suppose trying to balance different people's expectations of what Wilderness should provide. How many people do you want to see while in the wilderness? How "good" should the trails be? What level of backcountry food storage should be available? To what level should people be restricted from entering the wilderness (through quotas), despite our knowledge that people today would benefit from spending more time in wilderness areas.

Comments: Dear Superintendent,

Below are my comments and concerns regarding the management of Yosemite Wilderness. Foremost, I applaud Yosemite's consistent efforts to maintain their trails to a high standard. Their dual approach of crews removing down logs on (most) trails each season combined with lower frequency, higher intensity trail maintenance, means the trail crews succeed in keeping trails easily passable to visitors. Relative to National Forest Service lands and other NPS lands in the Sierra, Yosemite has abandoned very few trails - which I much appreciate, given that many sections of trail receive little use each year. My concerns are therefore few.

As means of introduction, please note that over the past few years I have hiked nearly every mile of trail in Yosemite NP, both for my recreation and for work on Wilderness Press guidebooks. I have therefore seen more of the park's wilderness areas over a short period of time than have many others. I have also conversed regularly with staff in both the wilderness and trails divisions and have shared detailed observations of trail conditions - and my musings - with them. Here I include only a few more general comments, but please contact me if you would like additional details on any trail conditions. (I have also

hiked extensively in the park for the past two decades, on and off trails, but the past few summers have provided me with an unusually intense snapshot of the western part of the park.)

One concern is that there are many stretches of less-used trail where mountain whitethorn is encroaching, making them unappealing to follow, and soon thereafter, difficult to navigate. If you want to spread visitors across more of the lesser used trails in Yosemite Wilderness, you need to make such excursions pleasant for them - after a nasty whitethorn walk, it is easy for a visitor to eschew future adventures in the western parts of the park. Whitethorn grows quickly, but is also easy to trim regularly - and quite necessary.

Second, there are two short stretches of trail that I am sad have been abandoned, because I think they would make enticing medium-length day hikes. One is the ~1 mile trail segment that traverses from Harden Lake east; not the well-used trail from Harden Lake that descends toward Pate Valley, but an old trail that follows a level gradient. The abandoned trail is still well used (and appears on most maps), but it is not easy to find where it diverges from the main trail and is obviously not maintained; the many footprints on it must belong to hikers who are aware of the route from old maps. Using this trail, visitors could hike an appealing 6-mile loop from White Wolf to Harden Lake, and back through the forests and meadows on the trail east of White Wolf. Currently, to complete this loop, hikers must descend 600 feet toward Pate Valley and immediately regain it. Second, there was once a trail that ran from near the Mono Meadows trailhead toward Tuolumne Meadows. There is now a 3-mile section of this trail that is fairly impossible to follow. Walking along the edge of Dana Meadows and in front of Mammoth Peak is beautiful. I suspect visitors would enjoy taking the shuttle to the Mono Meadows trailhead and then returning to Tuolumne on foot. I encourage you to re-gazette these two sections of trail into the "maintained" catalog.

Finally, as a part-year resident of Australia, I have noticed that in Australia (and New Zealand) it is a common trail-construction practice to install short stretches of synthetic (or wooden) boardwalk across particularly boggy trail sections. Perhaps such construction techniques are not allowable under the Wilderness Act, but they allow visitors to walk on otherwise dry trails without facing the "wet muddy shoes" versus "stepping off trail when I know I shouldn't" dilemma for just a few steps. I recommend that Yosemite consider such (or similar) construction techniques for high use areas where some bits of ground will always be wet early season. I am an adventurous hiker, equally content on trails or traveling cross-country, in sun or rain, but I am none-the-less always pleased when I see that I can walk 20 steps along a boardwalk instead of through a mud wallow.

As for trail quotas, I am a supporter of your Donohue Pass exit quota as an interim solution to the overuse of the John Muir Trail (JMT) corridor. If all JMT permits were issued by Yosemite, this would be a simple, functional solution. However, greatly limiting the southward flow of JMT hikers over Donohue Pass has simply changed JMT use patterns. Increasing numbers of people are seeking permits from various Inyo National Forest trailheads with large quotas, I would suspect creating a limited decrease in total JMT visitor numbers, but resulting in a pinch on permits in for people doing non-JMT trips originating in Inyo NF. I appreciate this is the same problem Yosemite previously faced, with JMT hikers taking over too many of Yosemite's permits and am glad that permits from non-JMT trailheads can no longer be used for JMT-corridor hikes. It is just that the problem has now been moved elsewhere. I know cross-boundary solutions will be difficult to achieve, but recommend continued efforts be made - or perhaps simply that you increase the quota for a pass-through Lyell Canyon permit with a Donohue Pass exit. The latter would avoid the impact along the section of the JMT between Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows, but would be an acceptable alternative to most JMT hikers.

Some of the greatest abuses to the Yosemite Wilderness I have seen in the past years has been by PCT hikers passing through. Increased ranger presence along the PCT corridor is required during the weeks of peak PCT-hiker flow to limit the damage done. I saw PCT hikers camped virtually on the trail, damaging trail margins to avoid slightly damp areas, and in particular, PCT hikers with dogs. The PCT hikers with dogs displayed no obvious disabilities and the loop-hole that allows dogs in wilderness for owners with disabilities needs to be tightened.

Last, I am always appalled by the impact of stock trains resupplying the High Sierra Camps. The trails frequented by these large stock groups are gravelly and less pleasant to walk; there is the continual stench and visual impact of horse droppings; the reduced water quality in areas with high concentrations of stock manure (as shown by Derlet in a series of scientific papers); and simply the all-too-frequent disruption of large stock groups passing by. I accept the historical importance of these camps and their existence for people unable to carry all their own gear. However, I question the necessity for quite such large numbers of stock for each person served. In particular, you should reconsider your policy of people riding into the camps on horseback.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 603 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 05:41:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The current system does not allow visitors to craft the custom experience they are looking for if they choose to hire a guide.

Topic Question 2:

It is important that the high qualified guides (AMGA Rock Guide, AMGA Alpine Guide, IFMGA Mountain Guide) be considered as selection material to obtain a CUA (Commercial Use Authorization). This will address many issues and insure that guided visitor's experiences are enhanced. By upholding this high standard, visitor safety is enhanced and principles such as environmental stewardship are taught. In the long run this will serve the park and ultimately reduce social impacts facing the park today.

Comments: Modern professional mountain guides are trained, invested, and professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource; Therefore, it is critical that additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities be made available, to the highest trained professionals.(AMGA Rock Guide, AMGA Alpine Guide, IFMGA Mountain Guide). Guides who have obtained this level of certification have not done so half heartedly. These are the individuals you want guiding the public to create the best experiences, uphold standard of safety, and teach visitors how to be stewards of the land.

Correspondence ID: 604 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

That is prioritizes protecting the spectacular natural resource for generations to come.

Topic Question 2:

Crowding issues and lack of budgets to help protect the resource with rangers on the ground educating the public in LNT practices.

Comments: Certified Guides are highly educated professionals that have been trained to be stewards of the environment, resources for rescue and technically competent individuals in vertical terrain. They provide visitors with high level experiences otherwise not accessible. The current system in Yosemite is completely restrictive and only one concession is able to provide a vertical visitor experience. This eliminates the majority of professionally certified guides by the AMGA from the parks resource which are unquestionable the most sought after vertical experiences in the world. One company limits any diversity of experience a visitor can experience and I believe Yosemite is still the only national park who has a monopoly for guiding. There are many resources professional guides would utilize in the park to prevent over crowding of popular climbs, because a certified guide is trained in how to manage the resource and work with the public. Commercial Use Authorizations have proved to be a successful, reasonable way to allow sole proprietors and small businesses to utilize public lands, specifically National Parks. Allowing guides with the highest level of credentials (AMGA/IFMGA Mountain Guides, AMGA Certified Rock Guides and AMGA Certified Alpine Guides) to guide in Yosemite National Park would be a great move forward in recognizing the importance of training and certification and it's role in improving the education, safety and quality of the visitor experience. Isn't it peculiar that a plumber or electrician has to be licensed to practice their craft, but a guide who has someone's life in their hands in hazardous environs does not in the U.S.? It would be a big move forward for Yosemite and public lands to set a precedent allowing Certified Guides to be stewards and resources in Yosemite National Park. Thank you for taking the time to consider all the facts in protecting this invaluable resource and providing quality and safe visitor experiences to enjoy it responsibly.

Correspondence ID: 605 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 07:31:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

My husband and I own and trial ride mules. We like the way the NPS allows the use of stock in the wilderness for recreation and trail maintenance. Mules and horses have been used from day one and we feel that there can be a plan that accommodates all users, including horses and pack stock. It has been a dream of ours to ride in Yosemite some day soon. My husband is getting up in years and it is difficult for him to get around by hiking. Riding his mule will allow him to continue enjoying the back country for many more years.

Topic Question 2:

I feel education, research, and partnership agreements with volunteer groups is the key to finding and maintaining solutions to the user conflicts and resource management. The NPS needs to have open communication with the user groups so they can come up with alternative ideas to keep horses and pack stock using the Yosemite Wilderness.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 606 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 07:37:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Yosemite is an amazing resource for the U.S.. We are so lucky to have a broad swath of wilderness in the vicinity of big cities and lots of people. It's a magical place and has been maintained as true wilderness...a place to escape.

Topic Question 2:

Guided wilderness experiences, such as climbing and mountaineering in Yosemite is one of the most important issues facing Yosemite today. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would like to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. Guides can act as stewards to the environment and stewards to the park. Guides are advocates for wilderness and care for the environment. Guides can be stewards for the Yosemite wilderness. They are great educators and provide high level training for clients and public alike.

Comments: As a lover of the outdoors and the wilderness, I would love to see Yosemite offer increased access to guides and guide services, for climbing and mountaineering opportunities. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Trained guides are invested in the Yosemite Wilderness and can act as professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

I would like to see additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs). These CUAs should be reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

In my opinion, the highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, the AMGA ski guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering). This would be a great way to determine who would be qualified to guide in Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 607 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 07:49:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Friday, January 29, 2016

Superintendent Neubacher
Yosemite National Park
PO Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Subject: Respect the intent of the Wilderness Act - - Public Scoping Materials for the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan/EIS

Dear Superintendent Neubacher,

Thank you for inviting the public to comment on the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan / Environmental Impact Statement.

"With regard to areas of wilderness, we should be guardians not gardeners."
-- Howard Zahniser, author of the Wilderness Act

As the scoping letter Yosemite National Park issued points out, "The Wilderness Act requires that the National Park Service evaluate the need for commercial services within wilderness (i.e. guided hiking, climbing, and stock use). This project will determine an appropriate amount of commercial services in wilderness." The Wilderness Act also requires that commercial services to be proper for Wilderness. I would hope that the National Park Service intends its evaluation of what is necessary and proper for commercial services (i.e. guided hiking, climbing, and stock use) respects the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services to what is truly necessary and proper. Unfortunately, the appendices associated with the Merced River Management Plan (Appendix L in particular) are a great deviation from this requirement. I hope and expect the agency's intent is to correct past mistakes by doing a new analysis.

Other issues that should be evaluated include the proliferation of nonconforming structures and uses in Wilderness (for example, the use of helicopters and other motorized equipment) and resolution of the potential wilderness- -intended to be temporary- -by the removal of nonconforming structures and uses in the potential wilderness and the designation of those areas as Wilderness.

"Every man who appreciates the majesty and beauty of the wilderness and of wild life, should strike hands with the farsighted men who wish to preserve our material resources, in the effort to keep our forests and our game beasts, game-birds, and game-fish- -indeed, all the living creatures of prairie and woodland and seashore- -from wanton destruction. Above all, we should realize that the effort toward this end is essentially a democratic movement."
-- Theodore Roosevelt

All alternatives should ensure that the wilderness character and wildness of the Wilderness is maintained and even improved. Improvement of wilderness character would rarely, if ever, be from active restoration activities. Rather, such improvement would come from two main areas.

The first is careful stewardship and administration of recreation and other allowable uses. That way, it may be possible to eliminate designated campsites, at least in some areas, which often have nonconforming structures associated with them. The scoping letter recognizes the importance of visitor use and capacity so various methods of managing and reducing such use need to be evaluated. The second would be an agency management paradigm that recognizes the necessary restraint in administering wilderness and minimizes the impact from any nonconforming uses.

"We should boldly ask ourselves whether we want the national parks to duplicate the...entertainments of other resorts, or whether we want them to stand for something distinct...in our national life."
--Col. J.R. White, former Sequoia National Park Superintendent

An alternative (or multiple alternatives) that lives (lives) up to the intent of the Wilderness Act should be developed by Yosemite National Park. Key elements to all alternatives should include:

- * a strong wilderness character monitoring program. This must include monitoring of agency-authorized use of motorized equipment, which should be extremely rare to nonexistent;
- * allowing natural processes to define the character of the wildernesses;
- * prohibit the use of motorized equipment and permanent structures for wildlife, cultural resource, or scientific purposes;
- * requiring all public uses of wilderness listed in section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act be conducted in a manner consistent with wilderness preservation. For example, this means no motorized use and no installations or structures;
- * ensuring that any outfitting and guiding (commercial services), if and where allowed, be both necessary and proper for wilderness;
- * ensuring that in the rare instance where exceptions to generally prohibited uses are necessary for management, that those exceptions be for the singular purpose of preservation of wilderness and that they be the minimum necessary (see Wilderness Act section 4(c)); and
- * reviewing policies about party size, numbers of stock, and backcountry allocations to ensure those policies meet the intent of the Wilderness Act.

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."
-- Aldo Leopold

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. Please do NOT add my name to your mailing list. I will learn about future developments on this issue from other sources.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 608 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 07:59:47
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Protection of wilderness from encroachment by mining, logging and real estate developers.

Topic Question 2:

Keeping safer those members of the public, young and old, who wish to hike to and climb on Yosemite's world renowned rock features, by allowing the public to hire qualified, certified guides of their own choosing to keep them safe and educate them properly in safety systems in Yosemite. Groups like the AMGA in the United States and the IFMGA internationally provide rigorous training and testing of guides and award certification only to the most qualified candidates. Highly qualified guides protect amateurs and keep the public safer, reducing the "rescue" burden on the Park Service. Yosemite should partner with the AMGA and IFMGA and allow the public to benefit from their training and certification regimes. This is how the Alps are kept safer in Europe and how it should be here.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 609 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The wilderness lands in the US are very well protected, and the result is that we can have an experience with the landscape and the mountains without feeling too much the impact of other people. This is very valuable for us as guides and for our guests

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue facing the wilderness is that people will not experience it because they are too busy with work, life in cities, technology. If people do not experience it they will not value it. If they do not value it they will not protect it in future years. The most important thing is to find ways to bring new populations to understand the wilderness: young people, people new to the outside environment, people new to activities in the mountains.

Comments: Under the system today, it is impossible for a foreign guide to come to Yosemite with their guests. The wilderness in Yosemite National Park is famous around the world, and the climbing and mountaineering possibilities are very special. The landscape and the environment in the Park is so unique and it is beautiful. Unfortunately the current system creates barriers for guides and their guests from any country outside the US - they cannot come and climb together. Of course foreign climbers can come on their own, but for those who would choose to go with a guide it is not possible. As guides we are so often able to connect our guests with new places and new experiences. This is a foundation of our profession; sometimes the new experiences are in learning - we teach our guests the skills they need in the mountains. Many times the new experiences are in places and landscapes away from busy cities. Yosemite National Park provides the option for all things together: learning, climbing, and experiencing wilderness.

If guides are trained professionals, it is part of their training and code of ethics to act for their clients' safety and as stewards/protectors of the natural environment. The international standard of the IFMGA - which has 23 member countries from all over the world - provides a standard of training in all areas of the profession: technical skills, risk management, client experience, care for the environment, and rescue.

If the NPS were to create CUA permits for climbing and mountaineering in Yosemite, it would create a new and more diverse way for people to come to the park. These permits can make it possible for foreign guides and their guests to come together to the Park. The IFMGA has spoken with other parks, and we have discovered that the CUA would be possible for foreign guides who 1. Have their business originate in another country 2. Bring their own clients from another country 3. Have their own liability insurance that covers them in the US.

P.S. I still remember my visit to the YNP and the friendly Meeting we had there. Say hello to everybody I know. I hope visiting once with my Family.

Correspondence ID: 610 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 08:40:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the protection of wilderness but with the ability to access and explore the wilderness through reasonable regulation.

Topic Question 2:

For me, the most important issues facing the Yosemite wilderness if having reasonable access to the wilderness with regulation that fits the purpose of the park and enabling visitors to get out there.

Comments: I really believe that Yosemite National Park should open up commercial guiding opportunities. There is a lot of opportunity, without crowding, for guiding in the park and I fundamentally oppose having one concession operate in the park. I think healthy competition that is adequately regulated will make the existing guiding better and enhance user experience. I'm fundamentally opposed to having a monopoly on guiding in Yosemite because I think it results in a complacency and laziness with how the land is treated and people's experience in Yosemite. I think that guiding opportunities should be opened up to a number of other companies and most importantly, to individual guides, with the proper training and experience. A set number of user days should be created and allow people to apply for those opportunities, distinguishing between wilderness days and "roadside" days to preserve the wilderness yet still allow access for people who want to experience climbing in Yosemite with a guide.

Correspondence ID: 611 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 08:50:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

Opening rock climbing guiding to more companies, rather than a single company.

Comments: 1. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

2. Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

3. As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

4. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

5. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

6. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Correspondence ID: 612 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
(See comments below)

Topic Question 2:
(See comments below)

Comments: Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

The Wilderness Society respectfully submits these scoping comments on Yosemite National Park's Wilderness Management Plan.

The Wilderness Society is a national advocacy organization that protects wilderness and inspires Americans to care for wild places. We were founded in 1935 by some of the icons of the conservation movement, and we were the driving force behind the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964. We care deeply about the preservation of designated Wilderness and about the management of Wilderness areas in America's iconic national parks like Yosemite. At the same time, we believe strongly in the need to connect people to America's public lands and Wilderness areas and to grow the next generation of Wilderness stewards.

We recommend that park managers use this revision of the Wilderness Management Plan as an opportunity to consider expanding the availability of guided mountaineering services within the park. Our understanding is that, historically, the park's primary concessionaire had exclusive authority to provide guided mountaineering services. We think this model did not serve the public very well. We urge the park to give serious consideration to issuing new commercial use authorizations for guided mountaineering services. Further, if an Extent Necessary determination concludes that it is appropriate to do so, we suggest the park consider issuing Commercial Use Authorizations to multiple service providers in order to ensure the availability of a diverse suite of guided services to the public.

Recently, The Wilderness Society has been encouraging public land managers to recognize the critical role that guides and other outdoor leaders play in connecting people to public lands in an increasingly urbanized country. To make these connections possible, land managers should treat guided recreation as a facilitated use that furthers the agency's mission of connecting more people to America's public lands. Guided recreation should not be treated the same as an extractive use of public lands.

We believe modern professional mountain guiding helps further the educational purposes of Wilderness. In most instances, professional guides are committed stewards of the land and the Wilderness resource, and they provide a valuable service by sharing Wilderness values with the recreating public. In this way, they grow the community of people who value America's public lands and are willing to work to protect it.

For these reasons, we urge you to consider providing additional guided mountaineering opportunities as you revise the Yosemite Wilderness Management Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide scoping comments on the Management Plan revision.

Regards,

Correspondence ID: 613 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such

alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area and I enjoyed many visits to Yosemite NP with my family and have many fond memories camping there and loving this park. I plan to bring my horses to YNP and make more memories there in the wilderness areas on horseback. I've experienced the backcountry with my horse in the Yellowstone National Park and it was unforgettable! It was a natural thing to do as an American and a continuing tradition that has been happening there for centuries. Thank you for considering my comments and I sincerely hope and pray that I and other horseowners like me can one day enjoy Yosemite NP on horseback without harm to the environment or to others using best practices such as "Leave No Trace" to preserve this most beautiful place in the USA.

Correspondence ID: 614 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 10:04:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I love that many people from different walks of life actually get to interact with the "wilderness" in Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

I think the wilderness designation is a little strange in the valley. Much of the terrain that is designated official wilderness is not truly wilderness and therefore the management of those zones are a little out of step with wilderness management in other areas. Also, the fact that there are not options for the guided public in the wilderness is a little strange.

Comments: Personally I think a CUA program for guided climbing needs to be implemented in Yosemite. Low ratio private guiding has a low impact on the wilderness, even lower than non-guided public because you have a steward of the land with a vested interest in preserving the wilderness character guiding people through the wilderness and educating people how to be stewards as well. Many people who prefer to climb with a guide they know and trust cannot climb in Yosemite due to the current monopoly.

Correspondence ID: 615 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 10:04:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the education in place for visitors that help engage them in their surroundings and environment. I value that the permit systems further educate personal responsibility to visitors who seek more of a wilderness experience.

Topic Question 2:

Front country visitation, including but not limited to traffic congestion is a major concern that takes away from a more natural and intended National Park experience. Yet, opportunities for more backcountry and/or responsible access of more technical terrain is beyond the ability level for most visitors without more resources available to them.

Comments: Extending Yosemite's wilderness and technical opportunities to more visitors is essential for the future of Yosemite and immensely valuable to connect visitors in a more meaningful way to their environment. As education and competence of more challenging and/or backcountry terrain is beyond the level of experience for most visitors, extending commercial guiding in a responsible way is an imperative step.

More professionally skilled and trained technical and backcountry guides/experts give more opportunities to empower more visitors to engage with their environment in safer and more responsible way. Also, more wilderness and medically trained experts throughout the park adds to the resources the park has for extending valuable information to visitors, stewardship, helping in the event of emergencies (which the park has only limited resources for), and adding to the overall experience for more users.

Thank you,

Correspondence ID: 616 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 10:06:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think the quota system should stay in place to reduce traffic and protect the wilderness areas. I value the solitude that the quota system protects by reducing or limiting traffic. Continue to let stock trip into wilderness. This is especially more important as we all age. Stock trips let us old guys get into these areas without a backpack.

Topic Question 2:

Trail and camp area degradation.

More education to permit/non permit holders on how to protect the wilderness while in the wilderness. Hope to reduce trail expansion from not staying on the trail. Policing camp areas and promoting "No Trace Ideals".

Correspondence ID: 617 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the policing that the NPS does above all to maintain the natural beauty of YNP.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness is the sheer amount of people that access it and their level of competency. I would argue that most people who visit the park to explore the vast and wonderful wilderness are untrained and unprepared at best. While these definitely aren't qualifying factors for people to enjoy the great outdoors, Yosemite is a very real type of wilderness that most are not accustomed to. Having the proper training and experience is invaluable when an emergency situation arises.

Comments: I feel that commercial guiding should be opened up in YNP.

Correspondence ID: 618 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: January 28, 2016

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

RE: Access Fund Scoping Comments to Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Yosemite Planners:

The Access Fund welcomes the opportunity to submit these scoping comments to National Park Service's (NPS) Wilderness Stewardship Plan ("Wilderness Plan"). We provide these comments to assist Yosemite National Park (YNP) planners in developing appropriate and effective alternatives for Yosemite's Wilderness Plan.

The Access Fund

The Access Fund is the national advocacy organization that keeps U.S. climbing areas open and conserves the climbing environment. Founded in 1991, the Access Fund supports and represents over 6.8 million climbers nationwide in all forms of climbing: rock, ice, mountaineering, and bouldering. Six core programs support the mission on national and local levels: Climbing Management Policy, Local Support & Mobilization, Stewardship & Conservation, Land Acquisition & Protection, Risk Management & Landowner Support, and Education. California is our largest member state and Access Fund members across the country regularly travel to Yosemite to climb at this world-class destination. We have a long history working with Yosemite planners on a range of management initiatives including the Merced River Plan and many other management plans and issues affecting climbing and the climbing environment in Yosemite National Park, and we welcome this additional opportunity to participate in the development of Yosemite's Wilderness Plan. To learn more, visit accessfund.org.

Yosemite Climbing

As acknowledged in Keeping It Wild in the National Park Service: A User Guide to Integrating Wilderness Character Into Park Planning, Management, and Monitoring (NPS 2014), the NPS recognizes that climbing is a legitimate and appropriate use of wilderness, and that "climbing provides sought-after visitor experiences in wilderness and desired conditions for visitor use should be developed and defined in the context of wilderness character." Such desired conditions should be developed considering that, among other things, "climbing is a traditional form of primitive recreation that is appropriate in wilderness and solitude and unconfined recreation qualities of wilderness are sought after by climbers." Climbing also fits NPS's 2006 Management Policy 6.4.3 regarding Wilderness which requires that "recreational uses of wilderness will be of a type and nature that ensures that its use and enjoyment (1) will leave it unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, (2) provides for the protection of the area as wilderness, and (3) provides for the preservation of wilderness character."

As Yosemite planners well know, Yosemite National Park's wilderness contains many of the world's most celebrated and iconic climbing objectives such

as El Capitan, Half Dome, Sentinel, Cathedral Rocks and Spires, Royal Arches, Mt. Conness, Fairview Dome, Cathedral Peak and many others. The occasional use of fixed anchors is necessary for climbers to experience the many classic unconfined primitive climbing experiences found only in Yosemite Wilderness. The foundation established by this Wilderness Plan will serve as the basis for the standards and desired conditions that will govern a subsequent climbing plan for Yosemite-likely the world's most famous and important climbing area. Managing climbing activity in designated wilderness involves special attention to preserving the wilderness qualities of an area, preserving values on historic routes, and allowing for exploration of adventurous and technical terrain that make the wilderness climbing experience unique.

We understand that Yosemite planners are not considering specific climbing management provisions in the scope of this Wilderness planning initiative. However, there are many potential elements in this plan that will affect the climbing experience in YNP or may affect a subsequent climbing management plan which we understand may follow the completion of this Wilderness Plan. Accordingly, we provide the following comments without addressing the comprehensive list of issues that may affect climbing resources and use-patterns in Yosemite Wilderness.

COMMENTS

The Access Fund agrees with the following general categories identified by YNP which should be included in the scope of this plan and which are addressed individually below: Visitor Use and Capacity, Stock Use, Trail Management, and Commercial Services. We also believe that, within the larger category of Visitor Use and Capacity, Yosemite planners should consider precise zoning throughout the park which can effectively identify appropriate desired conditions for each zone based on a recreation opportunity spectrum in Wilderness and acknowledges existing use patterns and visitor needs. In addition, we also urge YNP to consider overnight camping/bivouacs that do not increase current camping levels, recreation access generally, protecting soundscape, and implementing Director's Order #41-the latter two are also individually discussed below.

Keeping It Wild promotes the concept that desired wilderness character should be systematically defined first and then periodically monitored through visitor-use assessments and the implementation of indicators and standards methodology. Accordingly, this Wilderness Plan should develop measures "to determine at what level wilderness character is either enhanced or degraded" by visitor use activities and also define when management actions are necessary to maintain acceptable standards.

Visitor Use, Capacity and Zoning

A qualitative description of the integrity and character for Yosemite's wilderness, including visitor experiences for activities such as climbing, will help clarify appropriate desired conditions for the many and diverse areas within Yosemite Wilderness. This dynamic management planning process should identify visitor use categories and the settings in which different types of visitor uses-including climbing-are appropriate. As recognized in Keeping It Wild, this process is an inherent aspect of management zoning.

We agree with the strategy in Keeping It Wild (which is not always utilized by NPS wilderness planners) that points to the use of management zones to identify desired conditions for different geographic areas in Yosemite. These zones can be used to manage social and environmental conditions as well as determine, if necessary, the appropriate time and scope for mitigation. Given the diversity of visitor use, wilderness character, and management needs at different locations in Yosemite, planners should consider developing multiple zones for this plan with each designed to preserve wilderness character and accommodate the needs of visitors.

This plan should consider different conceptual management alternatives that propose a range of different actions and outcomes, with different combinations over the park's wilderness landscape with each management zone variously emphasizing the five qualities of wilderness character. For example, a "high-use recreation zone" may be developed to emphasize primitive and unconfined recreation, acknowledging that solitude opportunities may be reduced as compared to a "primitive backcountry zone"-yet both zones carefully maintain wilderness character. In this way YNP's Wilderness Plan can develop an appropriate range of planning alternatives that address the realities of visitor use in YNP Wilderness while both providing for a range of unconfined wilderness opportunities and preserving wilderness character. Through this zoning process, Yosemite planners can consider and develop planning alternatives for, among other issues, overnight camping/bivouacs, recreation access, stock use, trail management, and commercial services.

Stock Use

As acknowledge in its public scoping notice, NPS minimally manages the location, timing, and amount of stock use within the YNP's wilderness areas. The Wilderness Plan should include guidelines for stock use that will minimize and mitigate impacts from stock use to natural resources, and avoid impacts on or conflicts with other wilderness users. Such impacts include but are not limited to excessive dust, trail erosion and fecal matter along multiple-use trails.

Trail Management and the Use of Volunteers

When considering trail management in this Wilderness Plan, YNP planners should consider formalizing and maintaining climber access and descent trails (including common bivouac locations), climber access points and parking needs. Moreover, in developing a management framework to address the maintenance of existing trails and when to construct and how to manage new and existing trails, planners should acknowledge the importance of volunteers and encourage their participation to assist NPS in fulfilling its mission. Since 2004, the Access Fund has supported thousands of volunteer climbers, organized by the Yosemite Climbing Association during its annual Yosemite Facelift, to help the NPS cleanup and maintain the Park. In 2015, the Access Fund's Conservation Team worked with the NPS to administer a clinic to provide volunteers with technical trail maintenance skills for mitigating user impacts. The Wilderness Plan's trail maintenance framework should include a process for ongoing collaboration with volunteers that ensures their ability to meaningfully contribute and effectively leverages their support to appropriately manage visitor experiences in wilderness.

Commercial Services

Currently Yosemite provides climbing guide services through a single concessionaire (Yosemite Mountaineering School), thus limiting opportunities for those who wish to visit Yosemite and climb with a guide. The Access Fund believes that Yosemite planners should consider new guiding opportunities (for rock climbing and mountaineering) by permitting new commercial use authorizations that enable a range of independent guides, guides services, and organizations to access the world class climbing in Yosemite Wilderness. Accordingly, planners should consider a new "extent necessary" process for commercial climbing guide services for various areas with an established visitor capacity determination that can appropriately be allocated between the general public, commercial users, and those with special use permits.
Director's Order #41 Implementation

The Access Fund, along with our partners at the American Alpine Club, The Wilderness Society, National Parks Conservation Association, and American

Mountain Guides Association have been working for a year on recommendations to the National Park Service regarding the implementation of Director's Order #41 with respect to the use and management of climbing fixed anchors. The purpose of this project is to provide information to NPS staff regarding the fundamentals of wilderness climbing practices and use patterns with respect to the use and authorization of fixed anchors, and to clarify the NPS policy on managing fixed anchors and climbing-related impacts in wilderness-in particular management strategies related to wilderness zoning. While this Wilderness Plan is not intended to specifically address climbing issues, our DO #41 recommendations may nonetheless inform Yosemite planners on this wilderness planning initiative and assist with subsequent wilderness management policies. We will keep Yosemite planners apprised of this work, which has been well received by NPS officials in Washington, DC as a potentially valuable tool for making NPS wilderness management policies more effective in Yosemite and service-wide.

Soundscapes

The Wilderness Plan should also propose actions to address noise impacts affecting wilderness character, including sources from motorcycles, aircraft, garbage collection, woodcutting, and "The Green Dragon" and other tourist vehicles. The Merced River Plan identified aircraft and vehicle noise as the top two noise sources and the top two priorities for management action, yet soundscape impacts remain unaddressed in Yosemite plans.

Climbers are uniquely impacted by harmful soundscape impacts. During the summer, motorcycles roar up from Yosemite Valley and through Tuolumne Meadows daily, with groups of up to 36 motorcyclists on holiday weekends filling the road corridor with a tremendous noise that can be heard for miles and significantly impairing the park's wilderness character. Trash collection is often the first noise that waking El Capitan climbers hear, and loud megaphones droning from the Green Dragon continues all day long during high season, a noise that could easily be removed from the Valley by the use of earphones. This noise not only exceeds NPS soundscape management standards and the requirements of the Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, it also violates NPS regulations and the California Vehicle Code. This plan is the opportunity to address this long-overdue management action that is critical to preserving the park's wilderness character.

* * *

Thank you for considering the Access Fund scoping comments that identify management categories that we believe are necessary for inclusion in Yosemite's Wilderness Plan. While climbing management will not specifically be addressed in this plan, the establishment of a range of management zones that identify diverse desired conditions will protect and maintain wilderness character while designing appropriate management actions related to visitor use at different zones throughout the park's wilderness. Developing multiple zones with identified capacity limits and desired conditions will assist park planners to plan for the appropriate categories of overnight camping/bivouacs, recreational access, trail management, commercial services, soundscapes, and stock use. These zones will also effectively allow NPS planners to subsequently develop an effective and appropriate climbing management plan after this planning process is completed.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments related to these comments, and we look forward to working with Yosemite planners through the preliminary alternatives and draft plan phases of this important planning initiative.

Regards,

The Access Fund

Cc: Yosemite Climbing Association
Bay Area Climbers Coalition
Bishop Area Climbers Coalition
Climbing Resource Advocates for Greater Sacramento
Southern Sierra Climbers Association

Correspondence ID:	619	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan,29,2016 10:37:02				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Trail maintenance, signage and the wilderness permitting system are all working pretty well.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues facing the wilderness right now are overuse and misuse. Commercial services and the number of permits issued for the wilderness need to be further limited, not increased. Non-wild/non-native animals should not be in the national park at all. The use of pack animals for commercial ventures and grazing stock in land that has been designated as wilderness is antithetical to true wilderness land-use values. Please do not cave into the pressures exerted by guide services and vendors. The impact on the land-and on the experience for citizens who are not participating in or profiting from these ventures-is profound.

I hiked the John Muir Trail from Mt. Whitney to Yosemite a few years ago. Sadly, arriving in Yosemite was the nadir of the entire trip. The teaming commercial area of Tuolumne Meadows was a jolt: cars, buses, traffic, garbage, stores...ugh. Moreover, even when I was miles away from the overtly developed areas, when I was miles away from the roads and the buildings, the trails themselves were still far from the kind of wilderness experience I had the privilege of enjoying on most of the rest of the very highly traveled JMT.

The trails in Yosemite were filled with horseshit, muleshit, hordes of flies and clouds of dust. And that's when they weren't clogged with the beleaguered animals themselves. Further, the trails are overbuilt specifically, and expensively, to accommodate this pack traffic. The heavy use of pack animals to transport supplies for luxury meals to clients staying in the elitist high-country camps is unconscionable for a national park. Romantic visions of this sort of experience of Yosemite need to be relegated to the history books. I understand that some people who want to enjoy the high country are not capable of carrying their own provisions. But fancy meals, with wine and steak and other extravagances (for the backcountry) certainly do not have to be part of the equation. The high camps can be stocked much more conservatively by human porters. The will to make this change simply needs to be cultivated at this time. And restricting the use of animals would do just that.

Over the years, I've also hiked, backpacked and climbed in many areas near The Valley and Tuolumne Meadows. There are too many people on the trails in general, especially on and around Half Dome and almost anywhere that is accessible as a day outing from these commercial hubs. I'm not sure how much more the park can limit the human use of these easily-accessed and iconic hub areas. It is simply too popular. I favor restricting vendor activity in The Valley and Tuolumne, too, but at this point in time I think that is unrealistic; the powers that be have too much invested in making this part of the park accessible to millions of visitors per year. Restricting pack and stock animals, however, is a no brainer.

Please, please, please: for the sake of current and future generations, restrict the number of backcountry permits the NPS issues in Yosemite, and make every effort to eradicate the existence of non-wild/non-native animals in the park.

Thank you, NPS, for all you do to make and keep our wilderness wild and wonderful.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 620 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 10:45:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: In my opinion, an open policy for guiding in the park that would allow AMGA to provide services in the Valley would bring high skilled experienced guides and improve the services for climbers.

Correspondence ID: 621 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 10:48:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
our problem is, that the US National Parks are not accessible for international certified mountain guides

Topic Question 2:

To give access to CUAs also for professional guides (IFMGA)

Comments: I write this comment from the view out of the international mountain guiding community. In summer 2014 i did take part at the sustainable mountains conference in Boulder CO. We still have the same issues. With the current system of access to the American National Parks it is almost not possible for international certified (IFMGA) mountain guides to come with clients to any American National Park. The National Parks are areas of really great mountain landscapes (eg Yosemite or Denali) and are desired targets for alpinists from around the world. International mountain guides travel all around the world with their clients for showing them the best mountain places worldwide and guide their clients to the summits. The current regulation is a big barrier for his practice and we have to go to places outside the US with our clients.

This is really a shame, modern professional mountain guiding is always based on sustainable practices and trained mountain guides have the education to show their clients the wilderness with their skills they have learned and this could be a big part of an education for the public. Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the environment.

Rock Climbing like in Yosemite is the one of the high skills mountain guides are known world wide, they are the real professionals for providing guiding services to their clients. This should also been possible in the US National Parks, they belong to the best places on the world and are well known. Here it would be really necessary, that professional guiding services are available! Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

The highest professional guiding credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, environmental stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering) for American guides, and IFMGA Mountain Guide for international guides.

President of the International Federation of mountain guides associations
(IFMGA/UIAGM/IVBV)
www.ifmga.info

Correspondence ID: 622 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
We appreciate how the NPS manages the Yosemite Wilderness. At the same time we would be delighted if IFMGA mountain guides could be granted permission to access Yosemite with limited, low-ratio CUAs.

Comments: Many mountaineers in Switzerland, when going on a mountain hike or climb, rely on the services of a Swiss mountain guide. It is often during such excursions that long-lasting friendships are forged between guests and guides. And after many alpine outings experienced together, it is not uncommon that customers feel the desire to seek such experiences in nature outside of Europe in the company of their mountain guides, to climb rock faces and peaks as a roped party on other continents, the Himalayas and the mountain ranges of South and North America high on their wish lists.

The IFMGA mountain guides see themselves as safety experts and teachers of nature in the wilderness. They have a particular appreciation for the US National Parks, because it is there that natural habitats and landscapes of extraordinary beauty are maintained and enhanced. And it is there that they can provide their guests with one-of-a-kind experiences in nature and further their understanding of natural cycles and of how everything in nature is connected. Guests who, without a guide of their own, would not visit the US National Parks. And that is why we would be delighted if IFMGA mountain guides could be granted permission to access Yosemite and other US National Parks with CUAs.

Correspondence ID: 623 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the Mule Pack trips allow those who cannot carry their gear on their backs can still experience the back country through the use of pack animals to drop their gear at a specific site. This allows for more people to enjoy the beautiful Yosemite back county.

Topic Question 2:

Keeping the wilderness areas wild.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 624 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.29,2016 11:20:06

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate that the NPS allows the placement of fixed anchors without a power drill. I also appreciate that the NPS has managed the park such that a wilderness experience is still possible even with the millions of visitors each year.

Topic Question 2:

I think that the roadside wilderness in Yosemite Valley needs to be addressed. Perhaps the boundaries should be reconsidered. A valley crag such as Swan Slab is a different animal than a wilderness crag in the Yosemite backcountry.

Comments: Thanks for the opportunity to comment on this subject. I'm a guide service owner and independent mountain guide based in Idaho. I think their should be a mechanism for additional low-ratio, independent/incidental guiding (rock climbing) in Yosemite National Park. As a guide service owner I hold several special use permits on national forest lands so I understand a lot of the administration behind commercial use.

I believe in the importance of the local guide service and as such the Yosemite Mountaineering School (YMS) is a reputable organization with a great track record. However, there are many users of public lands, including Yosemite National Park, who would prefer to access their public land with a guide of their choosing, not one assigned to them by the Yosemite Mountaineering School. Currently there is no way to facilitate this kind of use.

There are hundreds of mountain guides throughout the country who have clients contact them on a regular basis for guided trips to many locations throughout the world. Among these include Yosemite National Park. I would propose a limited number of CUA's (commercial use authorizations) be made available for this type of guiding.

I understand that this presents some challenges for land managers. Under the current system it's easy to keep track of the use and the manner in which that use is being conducted because there is only operator (Yosemite Mountaineering School). Barriers to entry for the CUA's would give Yosemite land managers the piece of mind they require. These barriers to entry should include:

- 1) minimum guide training and certification. Preferable would be that CUA's only be issued to AMGA or IFMGA certified guides. The specific credentials would be AMGA Certified Rock Guide, AMGA Certified Alpine Guide, or IFMGA licensed guide.
- 2) LNT Trainer Course
- 3) Current WFR Certification or equivalent medical training.

This would ensure that any guide issued a "new" CUA would have a level of certification equal to or higher than the highest trained members of the YMS staff.

I'm not aware what Yosemite Mountaineering Schools' current use figures are, but I would suggest that additional user days via CUA's be authorized based on a percentage of YMS's current use. I don't know the best way to arrive at that percentage, but I suspect the number could be between 10-50%. So if YMS is currently operating at 2000 user days, then an additional 200-1000 user days should be authorized via CUA's.

I think a tiered system of CUA's would be appropriate. For example, if we go with the 25% number, then 500 additional use days would be authorized according to the following schedule or something similar:

- 4 x 50 user days CUA's
- 4 x 25 user days CUA's
- 20 x 10 user days CUA's.

The idea would be to authorize incidental use for both independent guides as well as large or small guide services. However, any guides operating in Yosemite via "new" CUA's would need to meet the minimum criteria outlined above. These certifications provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. This would be of critical importance to land managers as they won't have as much direct control over use.

Consideration might be given to the term of the CUA. For example CUA's could be issued yearly, but are perhaps valid for 5 years. In other words an independent guide issued a CUA for 10 user days, would have 5 years to use the 10 days.

Thanks in advance for your consideration of my comments

Correspondence ID: 625 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think the strengths of the current management plan lie in their ability to effectively mitigate the immense number of visitors seeking to visit the park as best is possible. Though nobody appreciates the difficulty in acquiring a campsite, for example, I think everybody can understand that the sheer number of

people in the Yosemite Valley, surrounding wilderness areas, and the park in general needs to be controlled. How to do that is complicated, and I think the current system in so far as it does not relate to commercial recreation opportunities seems to me - a regular visitor to all parts of the park for the last ten years - to work pretty well. I feel the bulk of areas in the Yosemite Wilderness are protected appropriately, and that's apparent in the fact that even with huge numbers of visitors a year and a huge amount of infrastructure through the park, it is still as easy as ever to get lost in the magic of Yosemite, which to me means things must be working.

Topic Question 2:

I think that foremost, the protection of the things that make Yosemite special - the streams, lakes, cliffs, trees, forests, mountains, meadows, etc. - must continue to be our absolute top priority. These are the very heart of why people come to Yosemite, and I think in as much as it's reasonable, there is no room for compromise in our stewardship of them. I want to jokingly say that I also think the name changes of our favorite places in the Yosemite Valley are another pressing matter, but I realize that is not within the scope of this review, tragic though it is. Realistically though, as time goes on and more and more people visit the park, the preservation of the wilderness is the single most important issue, as without those things Yosemite just wouldn't be Yosemite.

Comments: While I can only make generalized comments about wilderness management at large, the purpose of my writing is to make specific comments about my hopes for future changes with regards to commercial access to that wilderness, specifically guided climbing. I say I can only comment generally on wilderness management because I am not an expert in that field. I am, however, a highly trained and experienced mountain guide - an American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA) Rock, Alpine and Ski Guide and International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA or UIAGM) Licensed Mountain Guide, as well as an LNT Trainer, Wilderness First Responder, and AIARE avalanche course instructor. Thus my expertise is in taking people into our great outdoors and keeping them safe and happy, while also acting as a steward of the land, and hopefully accomplishing the goal of not only whatever technical objective we might have, but of helping my guests to appreciate our special places and to see them as something worth preserving. The problem I'd hope to see addressed in this review is the fact that up until now, there has been no way for me to do that within Yosemite National Park.

A few years ago I sat in Dave Bengston's office and was told exactly that. Dave was quite polite and conciliatory as he explained to me that there was simply no way within the current concession structure for me to guide within the park. He explained that the process was prohibitively cumbersome because it meant becoming an employee of the Yosemite Mountaineering School, which meant becoming an employee of Delaware North, which meant undergoing the same process of drug screening, employee training, paperwork, etc. of every other park employee, and that that was simply not practical or realistic for either the park, Dave or myself if what I wanted was to simply bring a few clients on occasion to sample a few routes in the Tuolumne high country and the valley proper. I got the feeling that in explaining this he knew that it just didn't make sense. Here I was, a guide with the highest possible level of training and certification available, with an intimate knowledge of the park and a ten-year well of experience in Yosemite from El Cap to Cathedral to the Swan Slabs, and I simply could not bring my guests to climb in our most iconic national park. To me, this was sadly ironic, as those very guests and I had been climbing together for years, including in Grand Teton National Park, North Cascades National Park, the Canadian National Parks, and throughout the areas of the Sierra that are not part of the NPS system, yet we were not allowed by any means in this one.

So to me, that is a loss not just to myself a guide, but also to my clients who choose to enjoy their public lands with someone they know and trust. The fact that my story is not unique seems a failing worth addressing. The hopeful part is that the solution seems clear, and that solution is the adoption of a Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) program in Yosemite similar to that which already exists in other national parks like Rocky Mountain National Park and North Cascades National Park. However, I would strongly advise the park to consider the issue of credentials in selecting recipients of those CUA's. My heart rose when I saw that RMNP had decided to fix its long broken, exclusive concession system, but sank again when I saw that it had allotted new use to some of the worst companies in the industry, those infamous for sending untrained, unqualified guides with large, unmanageable groups of guests onto objectives that are inappropriate for the group's size and abilities. While that may sound scandalous, it is absolutely true. It is simply a fact that many of the large guide services operating in America today have business models predicated on hiring unqualified staff and paying them low wages to do jobs for which they are dangerously untrained. This conversation is a Pandora's Box that is best kept closed here, but it should suffice to say that these are not the companies that represent the future of the guiding industry, nor the best interests of land management, the guided public, or the professional guide. Rather, I think all of those interests are best represented by our AMGA certified guides, be they AMGA Rock Guides, Alpine Guides, Ski Guides or full IFMGA Mountain Guides. These are the guides who will best take care of the guest, the land, and the future because they've been rigorously trained and assessed on their abilities to do exactly those things.

I would ask that in considering the way forward, the park value the fact that many public users do want to hire qualified guides and guides they know and trust, and that the current system does not provide adequate options to fulfill those desires. The guided public has just as much right to enjoy the privilege of climbing in Yosemite as the unguided public, and it is my impression that their access has been limited enough up until this point that a reasonable capacity for guided climbing has not been reached. I would also ask that in granting increased access to the park, that you consider who might best take care of our special places. Is it an untrained young guide with a job at a large service eager to take whatever assignment is offered to him or her, or is it a real, experienced, vetted and qualified professional? To me, the answer is clear. That answer, again, is the CUA program, and the granting of those CUA's to services which are AMGA Accredited Businesses willing to staff programs in Yosemite with guides who are trained appropriately, AMGA Certified Rock and Alpine Guides and IFMGA Mountain Guides. Even more specifically, I would ask that you grant access to the one guide service in America with this standard as its mission, the Certified Guides Cooperative. In this, I think everyone wins.

Thanks for your consideration,

Correspondence ID: 626 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Currently of value and importance is the quota system and the wilderness rangers who work hard to promote a caring and respect from all visitors.

Topic Question 2:

Increased trail use is always a concern but I feel current quota systems and ranger patrols are able to address most concerns within the existing quotas.

High Sierra Camps that are located in the wilderness seem to have different rules than those that we all follow when in wilderness. Some examples: they burn trash, have huge campfires, use flotation devices in water, etc. This always offers a chance for a unique discussion when we take our kids groups pass these camps- being that we had already gone over wilderness ethics, protocols, and Leave No Trace with our participants. Personally I feel these high sierra

camps should try to abide by wilderness ethics and rules a bit more. :)

Comments: Lasting Adventures has evolved into one of the largest wilderness users in the park. We have an excellent track record of introducing hundreds (if not thousands) of people to the Yosemite Wilderness year after year. We do so with emphasis on Wilderness ethics, environmental awareness and Leave No Trace protocols. We take pride in working with the Wilderness staff and acting as "ambassadors" in the Yosemite wilderness.

Obviously we would like to see our use as commercial operators (albeit we are a nonprofit) continue. We also support the max group size of 15 as this offers for a terrific group size for our youth development programs - 12 youth and 3 guides. In this capacity we are able to offer programs that are challenging, supportive, fun, and significant all while supporting the intentions of the Wilderness Act.

Correspondence ID: 627 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 11:58:29
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

In the past the National Park Service has been able to balance protection of the Yosemite Wilderness with visitor use.

Topic Question 2:

With increased visitation it is becoming harder to protect the Yosemite Wilderness. I don't feel that decreasing the amount of permits is the only answer. I believe that increased education of visitors is sometimes more important than focusing on decreasing visitation. Limiting numbers is not going to remove the issue of people not practicing LNT principles in both the back and the front country. More education and enforcement of these principles are needed.

Comments: I always have reservations when these plans come out because there is a tendency that in the name of protection comes the decreased ability for visitors to experience the park in ways that they have done in the past.

My first concern is about the future of the High Sierra Camps. During the Tuolumne River Plan process it was evident that either people wanted them removed completely or people wanted them to exist as they currently are. There was not much said that that would fit into the middle ground. I feel that the High Sierra Camps should continue to exist in their current form, for they offer people who are not able to carry large backpacks, due to age or physical disabilities, the ability to experience these areas of the park.

My biggest reservation is with the definition of solitude and what it ensues.

In the webinars it was referred to as freedom from modern life, the ability to take personal risks, personal challenges and for self discovery. However, I feel that most people don't think of solitude that way but more of how many people they encounter while they are in the wilderness. Herein lies the problem - people have different ideas of what is solitude. How can this be accurately measure? To ensure solitude will this mean a reduction in wilderness permits because there is a tendency to want to continually reduce the amount of permits way below prior levels?

Since I can no longer backpack, my biggest concern about enforcing solitude is the possibility of day use permits being required. Since this had been proposed in both the Tuolumne River and Merced River plans, the possibility that it is going to come up again in this Wilderness Plan is high. If you are required to have a day use permit as soon as you cross the Wilderness Boundary in many places, especially in the Tuolumne Meadow area, this means that the boundary is only a few hundred feet away from the road or where you park your car. This would limit the ability of people to do short hikes or other activities spontaneously. On page 7-85 of the Tuolumne River Plan it is stated "day visitors would be encouraged to get out of their cars and take walks or short walks to sites of natural and cultural interest..." If a day use permit system is implemented this could become essentially impossible.

Correspondence ID: 628 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the efforts of the National Park Service to both encourage and support access to Yosemite Wilderness areas while simultaneously working to minimize the impacts of visitors to these areas.

Topic Question 2:

Visitor impacts to wilderness areas such as the Cathedral Lakes, Little Yosemite Valley, and Half Dome areas strike me as the most urgent area of concern. While overnight visitors to wilderness areas are informed of their potential impacts (such as camping in inappropriate locations, going to the bathroom, staying on designated trails, etc.) and how to minimize these, day hikers often enter wilderness areas with a lack of knowledge of their potential impacts. I feel the best way to address this problem is by having an increased presence of informative and/or re-directing agents in wilderness areas, including both volunteers as well as permitted, professional guides who do are not necessarily employed by the National Park Service or a concessionaire, such as the DNC. These agents could also work to maintain trail blocks in areas such as Cathedral Lakes, where I have frequently seen people traveling through restoration zones simply for lack of awareness. In addition, I feel there should be an increase as well as improvement in the number of signs in some wilderness areas. For example, the Half Dome summit trail can be particularly difficult to follow, especially at night (even with a headlamp, as I recently experienced). I do not favor any further requirement of day hiking permits, such as those imposed upon Half Dome hikers, as I feel this prevents too many people from "accidentally" discovering a love for wilderness areas.

Comments: As Yosemite National Park updates its Wilderness Stewardship Plan, I hope that it considers the need for more diverse opportunities for those who wish to access wilderness areas with a guide.

I am a former public school teacher who now aspires to work as a rock climbing guide. Currently, I am partway through the Rock Guide certification process offered by the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA). I have been rock climbing in Yosemite National Park for more than 25 years, and I have developed a deep appreciation for the privilege of experiencing these wilderness areas in a way that, I feel, heightens these experiences. After all, climbing to the summit of Cathedral Peak offers a very different experience from simply hiking on the surrounding trails. After climbing this same peak, John Muir stated, "This I may say is the first time I have been at church in California."

The AMGA's rock guide training program has impressed me with its emphasis of the role of a guide as a steward for wilderness areas. I feel those trained

by this or similar programs could offer a positive presence to Yosemite Wilderness areas while simultaneously mentoring new climbers into the activity in a way that can minimize their future impacts to these fragile places (not to mention lessening the number of future accidents).

While the Yosemite Mountaineering School (owned by the DNC) employs highly-trained guides who have proven themselves conscientious stewards of Yosemite wilderness areas, I feel the Wilderness Stewardship Plan would be greatly improved if additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities were made available through limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations. I know that I would be among the first to apply for one of these, and I can assure you that my primary goal would be to provide people with that same spiritual experience of wilderness that John Muir described while also serving as an educator and steward for these remarkable places.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 629 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 12:10:57
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I believe NPS has done a great job in handling bear/human encounters. Mandatory use of bear cans along with education of back country and front country users has reduced the non-natural interactions with bears in Yosemite. Bear should be viewed in their natural context not rummaging through backpacks. I also believe the Service has made strides in educating users about impacts on the environment and trying to impress upon the need for leave no trace practices. While much work remains, awareness seems to be higher than in years past.

Topic Question 2:

We users are loving Yosemite to death. Overuse of various high-profile areas in the park is denigrating the environment and the wilderness experience. Restrictions instituted for access to Half Dome was appropriate, but should probably be reduced further. The same can be said for the management of the John Muir Trail in Yosemite and other high-volume trails.

It is my belief that the time has come to phase out the High Sierra Camps. The volume of traffic they generate is inconsistent with wilderness values, as is the actual use- back country users do not need hotel-like accommodations that include showers, food service, and beds. There are real hotels in less sensitive areas to meet these needs. The Camps are from a bygone era.

Pack animal use should likewise be phased out in the park. I recognize that restrictions have been implemented, but it is time for an outright ban within the park. While there is a long history of pack animals on trails, their use was from a time when there was less demand on resources. Further, the view of what is wilderness and wilderness management has changed. Pack trains are inconsistent with these values.

I believe the Park Service should reduce use of highly impacted areas and seek to promote and direct users to less impacted trails. This requires reallocating resources to promote, manage, and maintain a deterioration trail system in the park.

Here is a short partial list of abandoned or under-maintained trails:

- 1 Foresta Road, from Foresta to El Portal via Foresta Falls (or via old trail)
- 2 Old Coulterville Road from Foresta to the Cascade parking lot
- 3 Tamarack Campground to Foresta trail head via Devils Dance Floor
- 4 Old Big Oak Flat Road, from Tamarack Campground to El Cap Meadow in the Valley
- 5 El Cap Ridge, from White Wolf to Ribbon Meadow
- 6 The mile of trail between Harden Lake and the "eastern" route from the Grand Canyon to White Wolf
- 7 The trail that goes between the Tuolumne Grove road and Aspen Valley and is still shown on many maps but not marked at the Tuolumne Grove road.

There are many more examples. These routes should be properly maintained and users, shut out from the high profile areas or simply turned off by the high volume of traffic, can be directed to these areas.

Regarding the John Muir Trail, while I support use restrictions I do not believe that limiting permits alone is a remedy. The Donohue exit quota may have slowed use for a year, but such restrictions are not the answer. Hikers denied entry from Happy Isles flip directions and start at Horseshoe Meadow south of Whitney. Others start in the middle of the JMT and hike in both directions. Quotas- -without viable options to address burgeoning demand- -will not work, and simply alienate user groups.

I suggest Wilderness managers work to develop alternative trail head starting points to disburse use and emphasize other routes. For instance, the Theodore Solomons Trail has largely disappeared from hikers' conscienceness. A promotion of that trail as an alternative for those unable to win the lottery for the JMT will help address demand.

Wilderness managers can help promote use of alternate trails by partnering with administrators of social media sites which focus on Yosemite trails and the JMT. To some extent, new rules have been announced via these sites informally, but there has been no apparent effort to involve these groups in the process. Why not try crowd-sourcing some of these use issues with user groups? The collective knowledge of blog readers can be tapped for new ideas and alternatives. The needs of the user group can be better addressed, and their is the opportunity to promote user buy-in. This is critical to development of wilderness policies that are effective.

I appreciate the opportunity to raise these issues. Increasingly it feels like the general user does NOT have a seat at the table when policies are created or decisions made to implement polices. Social media has been blamed as a cause of overuse of the JMT and other wilderness areas. However, there is a tremendous pool of resources and passion that can be tapped if the Park Service is willing to think outside the box. These groups need to have ongoing and meaningful impact on policy.

Thanks.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 630 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 12:12:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Control and education of human visitors, protection of the natural environment as much as possible.

Topic Question 2:

Limit commercial services, people who cannot do without them should vacation and visit elsewhere.

Stop use of helicopters and other motorized equipment in the wilderness.

Remove non-conforming structures and uses.

Preserve and maintain wilderness character.

NO U.S. NAVY SONIC WEAPONS USE over or in vicinity of the Park

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 631 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 12:17:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I understand the High Sierra Camps (HSC's) are deemed "potential wilderness additions" and may continue to exist only as long as they are not fully incorporated in the Yosemite Wilderness.

Having done a five-day guided hike during which our party stayed at three of the HSC's, I value the HSC's and the access they provide to people (like us) who might experience the Yosemite Wilderness in a much more restricted and less meaningful way if the HSC's did not exist. Only a limited percentage of people can immerse themselves in wilderness over a multi-day period via backpacking and overnight camping, carrying all equipment and food with them. For the rest of us, the facilities of the HSC's permit people to spend several days in and close to the wilderness and to appreciate the richness of a wilderness experience at all hours of the day and night in a way that cannot be achieved through shorter visits and day hikes.

I believe that people who visit the HSC's are ambassadors for wilderness and for the National Parks, and that a reduction of access following any conversion of the HSC sites to full wilderness (and elimination of the HSC's), would reduce support for and understanding of the value of wilderness and the National Parks. At a time of pressures for more commercialization and more intensive uses of federal land, the reduction in such support would be unfortunate.

I urge that the HSC's be maintained in essentially the form in which they exist today. If the way the HSC's operate must be modified to reasonably reduce their impact on nearby wilderness, I would favor that. I believe both objectives can be achieved: (1) protection of wilderness and (2) greater access to wilderness through the availability of the HSC's.

Topic Question 2:

[No comment]

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 632 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 12:28:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am honestly not particularly familiar with NPS management in Yosemite. I, however, live in Estes Park, CO and am intimately familiar with Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) and its management. I value and respect the NPS as stewards of our land.

Topic Question 2:

Similarly to RMNP, I suspect that one of the biggest challenges is managing ever-increasing crowds but keeping the park in as natural a state as possible.

I have read recently about the potential changes in names of some historic places because of the rights that were given/sold to the vendor. I hope that if a new contract is let, consideration will be given to the public who rightfully should own those names

Comments: I visited Yosemite on a family vacation when I was ten years old and I have such fond memories of the trip.

At the age of 53 (I'm now 58) I learned to rock climb after moving to Estes Park, CO. It took me that long to find my passion but, indeed, I did. My dream has been to return to Yosemite but this time as a climber! To touch and feel and climb those rocks would be an experience like no other.

I climb every week to ten days with the Colorado Mountain School. I have the utmost trust in their AMGA certified guides. I have climbed with other outfits in other locations but none have inspired the confidence that these guides have. The AMGA is known for their high level of training from a technical and safety perspective. My greatest desire is to be able to climb in Yosemite with my regular AMGA guide.

In addition to their climbing skills, my guides live and teach "LNT" (Leave No Trace). That is precisely who you need guiding and teaching in Yosemite.

Please afford me and the rest of the public to whom these lands belong, the opportunity to climb with the best of the best!

Correspondence ID: 633 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 12:30:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate the commitment and effort the NPS makes to preserve the wilderness. I think the recent changes to impose a quota to exit over Donohue pass were a good effort to respond to greatly increasing usage on the JMT. There should be flexibility in the plan for the NPS to respond to changing usage patterns and be able to preserve the wilderness experience throughout the park.

Topic Question 2:

1. Avoiding creating barriers for those with few economic resources to enjoy the wilderness.

2. Providing responsible access to the wilderness, including remote areas that are off trail, that can be enjoyed but also preserved for future generations. In addition to regulations requiring visitors to practice Leave-No-Trace (LNT), consider requiring wilderness visitors to be trained in LNT.

3. Frequent fly-overs impact the wilderness experience - how can their impact be reduced. Can the park work with the FAA to establish rules to help protect the wilderness?

4. Protecting wilderness from drones. They should not be allowed.

Comments: Group size limits of 15 are reasonable. Further reductions in size may impose a financial barrier to the ability of some to visit the wilderness, especially those using commercial guides- such groups have fixed costs that are divided among the participants. With a smaller group each participant's share increases. It would be unfortunate for wilderness access to be difficult for those with fewer economic resources. Some individuals do not have the back-country skills to explore the wilderness without a guide, especially in more remote areas. Well run commercial services that practice and teach good practices such as LNT allow them to, but reductions in group size may make such services unaffordable for some.

The current off-trail group size limit of 8 may be necessary in some areas, but increasing it for some areas that do not see a lot of usage may provide opportunities for some, who would not otherwise be able to, a chance to experience more remote areas. Maybe 12 for certain areas would be possible - this is what SEKI is doing now. Certain SEKI areas are restricted to 8 for cross country, but other areas in the park have a limit of 12. The larger group size can make the trip more affordable when commercial services are used and keeping the price down helps to avoid creating economic barriers to enjoying the wilderness.

A large group can be well managed by LNT-trained leaders to have relatively low impact. Furthermore, such a group can have less impact than less-closely supervised small groups visiting the same area.

Limits should consider the total number of users in a particular area, rather than just the maximum size of a very few larger groups. To some, encountering a single group of 12 one time is less disruptive than running into 3 groups of 4 a total of three times.

People and stock should be counted separately when establishing group size limits. The impact of stock animals is more significant than of individuals without stock, even when both types of visitors are practicing LNT. With modern light-weight gear there is less need for stock as an access means. Consider significant restrictions in stock usage.

Commercial services (including non-profit groups such as the Sierra Club, with significant volunteer staffing) help individuals visit the wilderness in a responsible manner. Well run commercial services practice LNT and can help their participants follow such practices more effectively than such participants going into the wilderness on their own.

It should be easier for Yosemite NP to require additional training, such as LNT, for commercial services than for individuals. Moreover, commercial services with ongoing operations can also be monitored more closely than individuals for compliance with regulations. Thus, commercial services provide an opportunity for Yosemite to work with the commercial operators to help minimize the impact of wilderness visitors.

Correspondence ID: 634 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 12:32:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

I travel to Europe and Africa to climb and ski mountaineer as a guided client and am disappointed that I am restricted to do the same in Yosemite National Park, which is a short drive from my home and where I have a annual pass. Often if there are guides available, the guide that I have a long standing relationship with may not have a permit for the area.

Professional mountain guides are a most valuable resource and should be fostered by our National Park Service. Guides are able to take members of the general public into our public lands to experience the greatness of the natural environment, teach proper stewardship techniques and expand skills to travel safely across rock, ice and snow.

As a frequent and longtime backcountry user of YNP, I have never noticed overcrowding of the high country, beyond 2 miles from the trailhead, except for the pack animal groups. And I do not believe opening the park boundaries to commercial guiding will change anyone's backcountry experience negatively, on the contrary, I think it will improve the public's enjoyment of the park.

The positive economic impact of guiding should not be overlooked. Smaller gateway communities to YNP that struggle during the winter months may experience a resurgence if guided winter excursions left from their vicinity. Lee Vining, California would be a perfect example. The Eastern Sierra Crest is known worldwide for it's ski terrain and spring snow conditions and guided trips could open this world to new users.

Please, please make changes to the current system restricting commercial guiding so that as I age I can continue to enjoy my favorite activities in a safe manner with my preferred guide.

Correspondence ID: 635 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 636 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I think the management strategy is generally good, but there should be a different permit application system for commercial outfits. As a wilderness guide on both backpacking and pack-stock-supported trips, I appreciate trailhead quotas and grazing restrictions for being generally fair and effective ways to maintain healthy ecosystems and a 'wilderness experience' even in extremely popular areas. Guides from the various commercial outfits work hard not just to teach their guests about LNT best practices, but often educate other hikers along the trail. Guides are also often there to help injured and lost hikers. In general, I see myself and my fellow guides as assets in the backcountry, working towards the same goals as the backcountry rangers. I believe that the current permit application and campsite reservation systems make it unnecessarily difficult and stressful for outfitters to plan their calendars each year, with

the need to apply for permits on the day they become available, and then take whatever you get. College recreation programs face a similar challenge- in my recent tenure at the UCLA Outdoor Adventure program I spent an unreasonable amount of time applying for wilderness permits and attempting to secure campsites. There needs to be a better way for organizations to plan their calendars- -organizations that come back year after year, putting guides with medical and LNT training in the backcountry where they are helpful to all. I'm not advocating for higher quotas or more access- just for a better system for these schools and local businesses to plan their park visits. Perhaps the Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) administrator (currently the excellent Ruth Middlecamp) could have campsites and wilderness permits set aside for the CUA holders? There must be a better way to do wilderness permits than faxing permit application after permit application until one gets approved, and there must be a better way to reserve campsites than having a room full of people on the internet at 7am to secure campsites on the day they go on sale- and then ending up with the wrong permit dates and campsites because you don't actually market the trips until after the date when you had to secure the permits and sites!! So inefficient and frustrating! When I'm out on trail the rangers always treat me as a teammate in the effort to get the public to follow the rules and tread lightly. I would like to see park administrators start to treat outfitters as teammates and talk with them about better ways of planning their calendars.

Topic Question 2:

I'd have to say that worldwide ecological meltdown is the most important issue, which of course includes a lot of smaller concerns specific to Yosemite- - the chytrid fungus killing off the frogs, invasive plants taking over the foothills, beetles weakening the forests, etc. I've been delighted watching the hard work of the UC frog teams over the years, and seeing their real progress in the lake basins where their efforts have been concentrated. It's been great to see bear problems becoming less frequent due to the hard work of park rangers and biologists. In my work as a wilderness guide I've described these challenges, and the good work that's being done, to many, many park visitors (my guests and anyone else who stops to chat) and I look forward to seeing (and telling people about) more such efforts in the future. I'd like to see the park also taking on the large-scale problem by doing more to set an example. In addition to protecting our little chunk of heaven, we can (and therefore should) start ripples going out into the world that might help reduce the global impact of our civilization. I realize this sounds starry-eyed, but here are some specific suggestions: 1. Do more to show people how to function without their cars. Public transit is not popular in most parts of the US, and moving towards a better relationship with mass transit is one of the best things we can do to reduce our carbon emissions. The national parks should be aggressive about getting people out of their cars! Why don't we have a parking structure in Mariposa yet? Why are so many people still driving cars around Yosemite Valley? 2. Conventional agriculture is contributing to climate change through wasteful practices based on cheap oil. Park concessions should be required to patronize suppliers who use best practices. Why does our focus on environmental stewardship and education extend only to the park boundaries? 3. Why are campfires allowed in Yosemite Valley at all? It's not cold there in summer, and there are 1,000 fires burning every night! Why not just one big ranger-led fire in each campground, where people can gather to interact with each other and with park rangers and volunteer educators?

Comments: Yosemite is basically well-managed (thank goodness, since it is absolutely the best place on earth). The valley is the main problem, in my view, with too many cars, fires, and wasteful concessions. But since this is a survey about wilderness management, my main hope is that a better partnership will be forged with commercial outfitters. It's really hard to plan our calendars, since we have to compete for wilderness permits before we've even booked most of our trips. Guides are great assets to the park, teaching people to be model park visitors and helping folks who run into problems out in the wilderness. Please treat us as partners, not adversaries! On a different note- -one thing that didn't fit into the categories above, maybe it's beyond the scope of this discussion, but I'll say it anyway- -I don't think it's right that only one company can guide rock climbing in the park. Downright un-American, and it inevitably leads to abuses and inefficiency. Thanks for reading my comments, and keep up the good work!

Correspondence ID: 637 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 13:01:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The access to the climbing and general public.

Topic Question 2:

Continued access for climbing and being able to use certified guides of my safety while climbing.

Comments: Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain. The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering). Again, please pass this along to your clients-having the park hear from the guided public is equally crucial.

Correspondence ID: 638 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Already done.

Topic Question 2:

GRAZING

The information on "Stock Use in Wilderness" that was distributed by Yosemite National Park (YNP) addresses grazing in the "Current Management" section. Because the Yosemite Toad has been listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act I suggest that the Park Service spend some time studying the best available science concerning stock grazing in Yosemite's high meadows in order to protect this threatened species. Therefore, the timing and location of grazing is regulated in Kerrick Meadows.

A collaborative study between the Forest Service and the Universities of Davis and Berkeley was done in September of 2007. This study focused mainly on cattle grazing. It generated two peer-reviewed papers published in scientific journals. The hypothesis going in was that the toad and its meadow habitat were declining due to grazing impact, and reduction in grazing intensity would halt or reverse the decline. This turned out to be false.

Kelly Wooster and his family have held a cattle grazing permit on the Highland Lakes allotment, in the Stanislaus National Forest since 1941. Livestock have grazed this allotment since about 1865. The Forest Service has conducted surveys to find Yosemite Toads on this allotment from 1995 to at least 2002. They found numerous occupied Yosemite Toad sites. In 2001 the U.S. Forest Service, Region 5, issued a decision that excluded livestock from toad breeding habitat. In 2004 it mandated a study on six allotments which included the Wooster's allotment. The study compared grazed sites with sites where cattle were excluded, and found no detectable effect of grazing on toad young, on breeding pool occupancy, or on water quality, or on cover. It has also

been discovered that toads breed in the winter when the pastures are under snow, and no grazing is occurring. It is also interesting to note that the two studies that reflect substantial declines in toad populations took place in YNP, where no cattle grazing is allowed.

I suggest that the Park Service contact Kenneth W. Tate Ph.D. in Davis, CA. [REDACTED]. Dr. Tate was involved in these studies, and gave an excellent power point presentation to the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, that unequivocally rejects any adverse effects from proper livestock grazing on either the Yosemite Toad or its habitat.

After reading these extensive studies on grazing and Yosemite Toads, here are my personal thoughts on stock grazing in YNP. I have noticed over the years, and especially in Tuolumne Meadows, an encroachment of conifers into the meadows. The trees suck up water. The meadows become dryer, and the wet habitat disappears. Meadows that are grazed keep the conifers from encroaching and destroying the wet land that frogs and toads need to survive. Therefore, based on the scientific studies, it is my opinion that grazing poses no threat to amphibian habitat. In fact removing grazing may actually pose a risk to them. Toads move to the uplands from the meadows. Grazing removes some grass. This makes it easier for the toads to move. The Forest Service UC study points out that the toads more consistently occupy non-flowing pools that are nutrient-enriched. Horses and mules can supply these nutrients. I urge the Park Service to use the most up to date best science available, when considering restrictions on grazing in YNP. We know that amphibians have co-existed just fine with grazing animals for well over 100 years. What we don't know, long term, is what will happen if grazing by stock is eliminated. Thank you again for allowing me to comment on these important issues concerning the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 639 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 13:05:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Being from Colorado I am not abreast of the detailed management of Yosemite. But I appreciate that the park is protected, and that the resources and wildlife are protected.

Topic Question 2:

I think the most important issue is that of guiding in Yosemite. Someday, I would like to visit the park but the park is so vast that I would ideally hire a trusted guide to show me around so I could make the most of my visit.

Comments: As someone who often hires a guide for my adventures I would love to see Yosemite open up more guiding in the park. When I eventually make it to Yosemite to explore, I would like to hire a professional to show me around and who could personalize my adventure. When I think of all I have learned from guided trips I am so grateful to have had the experience to explore w someone who knows more than I do. And more importantly; w someone who is extra safe because of said knowledge.

My adventures are so much more rewarding and challenging when I am lucky enough to hire a guide.

If done right; limited number of guides and the size of groups; this can benefit all the users of Yosemite. Thank you for opening the discussion!

Correspondence ID: 640 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 13:16:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness-from the skills training we all provide to guide education programs such as the AMGA.

As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Topic Question 2:

Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 641 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 13:16:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that a wide range of access is available for park visitors especially guided rock climbing instruction.

Topic Question 2:

I believe that more people than ever are interested in climbing and are visiting the park. As a guide I enjoy helping individuals and groups access climbing and learn risk management and proper techniques. Increased access for guiding would truly benefit the visitors of what I believe to be one of the most valuable national treasures our nation has Yosemite National Park. I believe that the American Mountain Guides Association is dedicated to preserving our natural resources and know that I and others strive to teach LNT practices to climbers. Trained guides are an asset to the National Park System in many ways. Thank you for your consideration and efforts to shape a quality plan for this place I love so dearly.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 642 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 2:

The AAC believes that opportunities for guided and facilitated climbing experiences should be expanded. At the AAC, we have seen a significant increase in the numbers of emerging climbers. Gone are the days when the next crop of outdoors people could learn from a small group of experienced mentors. Groups with qualified leaders are needed to teach the next generation of climbers and backcountry users how to be kind to the land and safe in their adventures. We believe that a more knowledgeable generation of climbers could be partly achieved by separating the climbing concession from the larger concession and adding more climbing concessions to increase opportunity and competition. Expanded opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUA) that are reasonable for sole proprietors, non-profits and small businesses to obtain. Expanding the climbing concession and simplifying the CUA application process will help address the following issues:

â€ Safety & Stewardship
â€ Marketplace Demand

Safety & Stewardship

New climbers do not necessarily have the knowledge and skills to operate independently in a wilderness climbing context. Guided and facilitated climbing experiences are critical in developing a community of competent, safe climbers and stewards of the land. Opportunities for facilitated and guided experiences:

- â€ Provide interpretation, education, and conservation opportunities.
- â€ Teach climbers the skills and risk management necessary to climb safely.
- â€ Support a new appreciation for the park and backcountry.
- â€ Minimize impacts through teaching and implementing Leave No Trace principles.
- â€ Decrease over-crowding in popular climbing areas by bringing climbers to lesser-known areas.
- â€ Provide a more enjoyable time for all in the park.

The dramatic increase in new climbers in the U.S. means that the reliance on informal mentorships of years past is no longer sufficient. Organizations that teach climbing need greater access to the park so that the climbing community is competent and serves as stewards of public lands.

Marketplace Demand

The climbing industry is growing- more and more climbers are choosing to hire guides and professional leaders for education and formal mentorship. However, the current concessionaire program does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would like to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide or qualified leader. Such an unmet need can incite illegal guiding, resulting in missed business opportunities and inadequate accountability. Through expanding the concessionaire program to meet the demand for facilitated climbing experiences, the park will:

- â€ Ensure a consistent standard for the reliability and professionalism of a climbing service.
- â€ Strengthen the recreation economy.
- â€ Better regulate the climbing industry.
- â€ Increase competition for quality climbing services.

Certainly, Yosemite should be scrupulous in vetting its concessioners- their environmental and risk management practices- to ensure customer satisfaction and to increase the enjoyment of our parks.

Comments: January 21, 2016

Superintendent Don Neubacher
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

RE: AAC Comments for Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

The American Alpine Club (AAC) appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship Plan. We are eager to see the Plan updated to better align with contemporary use patterns. Of the management issues to be reviewed, the AAC is most interested in updates to the Plan's commercial services policy.

The AAC believes that opportunities for guided and facilitated climbing experiences should be expanded. At the AAC, we have seen a significant increase in the numbers of emerging climbers. Gone are the days when the next crop of outdoorspeople could learn from a small group of experienced mentors. Groups with qualified leaders are needed to teach the next generation of climbers and backcountry users how to be kind to the land and safe in their adventures. We believe that a more knowledgeable generation of climbers could be partly achieved by separating the climbing concession from the larger concession and adding more climbing concessions to increase opportunity and competition. Expanded opportunities should be made available in the form

of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUA) that are reasonable for sole proprietors, non-profits and small businesses to obtain. Expanding the climbing concession and simplifying the CUA application process will help address the following issues:

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- â€ Ensure a consistent standard for the reliability and professionalism of a climbing service.
- â€ Strengthen the recreation economy.
- â€ Better regulate the climbing industry.
- â€ Increase competition for quality climbing services.

Certainly, Yosemite should be scrupulous in vetting its concessioners- their environmental and risk management practices- to ensure customer satisfaction and to increase the enjoyment of our parks.

Thank you to the staff of Yosemite National Park for their service and for the opportunity to provide our thoughts on the planning process. We are eager to see revisions to the Plan that take into account the growth of climbing in America and the demand for more facilitated and guided opportunities.

Sincerely,

CEO, American Alpine Club

About the American Alpine Club

The American Alpine Club is the national community organization for climbers in America. With more than 16,000 members, we work to support our shared passion for climbing and respect for the places we climb. For more information about the AAC, visit www.americanalpineclub.org

Correspondence ID: 643 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 13:21:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I understand the limitations with funding from Congress have caused a severe moral problem with employees. I value and appreciate all the hard work they do for the park and for visitors. I have countless examples of rangers and employees going way beyond the call of duty in their work. I have been camping, climbing, hiking and skiing in Yosemite for over thirty years with my family and appreciate all the rangers and workers we have met along the way.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue to our family is the overcrowding of wilderness areas and the ancient permit system. These two issues MUST be addressed. It took me three days to acquire a permit for a hike in September. Running back and forth to Office Depot to FAX the form. FAX! No one has a fax anymore, really! After all of that we were disappointed to find that top of Clouds Rest covered with tourists! There was suppose to be (according to your documents) only 12 permits for that trail during those days! Then when we get to Half Dome, there was a wedding going on the top with a dozen guests and equipment. WTF! They held up the ladder for hour and half. How did a wedding party get permits when it took me three days for a couple of hikers??? Apparently your permit system is a failure and a failure for the wilderness experience.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 644 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 13:23:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Reasonable access and facilities while maintaining areas of less use.

Topic Question 2:

Increased use. One way that I believe the impacts of increased use can be addressed is through partnerships with professionals in the field such as climbing guides; see below.

Comments: I am writing to urge you to make available additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities through Commercial Use Authorizations that are affordable for small businesses to obtain.

I believe that professionally trained climbing guides are an asset to the National Park as invested stewards of the land and educators of the wilderness ethic to the general public and their clients. In addition, guides trained through the national guides organization enhance visitor safety and set an example for other users in the areas of safety, stewardship and reduction of social impacts.

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would like to use a guide while accessing the park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 645 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 14:00:56
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that there is still open access for climbing and mountaineering in Yosemite National Park. Climbing is an important part of the park's history and should be allowed and encouraged.

Topic Question 2:

The limited commercial use access is a huge problem in Yosemite. While it is great that the park is open for recreational climbers, the access for people who want to hire a guide is very limited. Because there is only 1 permit holder in the park, people are forced to hire guides from the small selection chosen by that permit holder. The guides available are not held to the international mountain guide standard of qualification (the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations/IFMGA). If more CUAs were available to qualified guides, people would be able to choose from a broader pool of guides and instructors. Qualified guides enhance the safety of the experience for clients as well as providing education on how to respect and care for the natural environment while still enjoying the sport of climbing and mountaineering. It would be great if independent certified guides and small guide services were able to offer climbing trips in Yosemite to their clients.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 646 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 14:10:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Of course, I value the NPS as our stewards of Wilderness and support their efforts to accommodate all those who access Wilderness and appreciate it in different ways.

Topic Question 2:

The single most important issue facing any Wilderness, including Yosemite, is education through experience. By facilitating education- -through the NPS and third parties- -we broaden the community of stewards and, by that fact, bolster support for long term protection of these lands. This includes allowing visitors to experience Wilderness is different ways, including climbing, hiking, boating, and other forms of non-permanent activities.

Comments: I am, first and foremost, a believer in the power of the preserved natural environment and all that it offers us, both spiritually and physically. As an avid climber, I value the connection I make with that environment during each ascent. I am not a professional climber (I spend most of my time at a desk), but I am able to make this connection most effectively and safely with the benefit of a professional AMGA and IFMGA climbing guide. Because of this, I feel strongly that the NPS should accommodate additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities in the form of limited, low-ratio permitting schemes that allow people like me (unofficial advocates of Wilderness) the opportunity to experience Wilderness with multiple, smaller AMGA and IFMGA trained guide services. We need to enhance our experiences with nature, not inhibit them.

Correspondence ID: 647 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

In general the preservation of wilderness is very important to me. I feel strongly that it needs to be protected and managed.

Topic Question 2:

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide or educational non-profit service.

Comments: As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

I also feel that non-profit educational organizations should be able to obtain Use Authorizations that are not subject to high fees or the same stringent regulations and commercially guided groups.

Groups like this are educating youth and people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to access the park.

They are also operating with limited resources and need to be viewed differently from commercial guided services.

Correspondence ID: 648 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 14:24:40
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
It is monitored well.

Topic Question 2:
Older adventurers like my husband and I could access the back country with a guide in the winter. We have summited Mt Rainer in the past with a guide and we would want to have a guide to assist us.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 649 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 14:28:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I enjoy the fact that they keep specific limits on usage of areas so that the natural beauty is preserved.

Topic Question 2:
I truly believe that Yosemite's lack of integration for privatized guiding companies creates an inefficient application of park activity. People hire guides so that they can enjoy areas of rugged wilderness they may not be accustomed to or feel safe in. The fact that Yosemite has never accepted a two part system of public access, and guided access is frustrating to me. I've both been on guided tours to begin my adventures in the wilderness, and now have worked with guide companies to fulfill my dream of helping others safely pursue a better understanding, appreciation, and respect of wilderness areas. I think guides are a necessary piece of the puzzle for people to enjoy the beauty that is Yosemite. I also believe that allow a few guiding companies access to preferred guiding permits and privileges creates a balance in cost for average citizens. When the only guides who allow privileges are one group, it creates a monopoly and a cost of use that is unfair to the average visitor. Please open the door to more private climbing and trekking guides in the future.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 650 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Good day,
Why does no hiking-, climbing-, or mountain-, trip that is organized by an IFMGA Mountain Guide leave traces in an intact natural landscape?
And why is it essential for a touristic region or for a natural preserve, for as many IFMGA Mountain Guides to be active there?

The majority of IFMGA Mountain Guides have grown up in nature and in the mountains long before becoming incontestable professionals in their field. They were thought by their parents, their friends and by their community how to introduce nature to the rest of the world. In their training they learned how respect and appreciation of the environment are fundamental elements in the guidance of their clients, on their way through nature. Any IFMGA Mountain Guide is bound by, either a written or a verbal contract, to guide, lead his clients as well as to brief them on safety measures and on local regulations. An IFMGA Mountain Guide has the certified competence to instruct his clients on walking, climbing and mountaineering techniques. He not only introduces his clients to the most effort saving techniques, he simultaneously takes precaution for the environment to be spared and preserved. An IFMGA Mountain Guide knows when and where to make breaks. Nothing annoys him more than rubbish even "biodegradable" one, that are left on resting spots. If any human traces must be left behind by a IFMGA Mountain Guide, then the one in the fresh powder snow of an unobstructed hillside. Furthermore are all IFMGA Mountain Guides trained in first aid and in mountain rescue, allowing them to reduce the risk of major accidents.

This exemplar behavior of an IFMGA Mountain Guide exerts positive influence not only on the long-term but also on the short term behavior of amateur-mountaineers and tourists. In nature he is the unofficial voice of local authorities.

So, to put it in a nutshell, an AMGA or IFMGA Mountain Guide is the ideal reference person for a park-administration.

Correspondence ID: 651 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Dedicated to preserving the wilderness character.

Topic Question 2:
User demand - visitor use and capacity.

Comments: January 29, 2016

Don Neubacher, Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
PO Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Subject: Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Dear Superintendent Neubacher,

This letter transmits the comments of Trout Unlimited (TU), Trout Unlimited of California ("California Council"), and other stakeholders (regional sporting organizations and businesses) on the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan review. The National Park Service recently released public scoping materials defining the potential management issues for Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan (Wilderness Plan) revision consideration, and below we articulate our priorities in those identified issues.

Sportsmen have a clear stake in the management direction, strategy, and priorities that may derive from the Wilderness Plan revision process. Many of our members and customers enjoy fishing in the Yosemite Wilderness and utilize these public lands and waters for personal recreation. Additionally, many of the undersigned local business owners and employees depend on access to these public lands for maintaining their livelihood as permanent residents of Yosemite "gateway communities" and authorized Yosemite National Park permit holders.

Permanently protecting the outstanding recreational, scenic, and habitat values of the Yosemite Wilderness is vital to ensuring we will continue to enjoy these pursuits in the future. While fish are non-native in much of the wilderness area, stocking is documented to have occurred as early as 1877, 107 years prior to the establishment of Yosemite Wilderness in the 1984 California Wilderness Act. Many of these waters contain naturalized populations of rare and endemic fish species such as California Golden Trout and Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, and this should be deemed as a special characteristic under the "Other" quality category - one of the five inter-agency determined wilderness character quality categories deserving preservation in the Wilderness Management Plan (i.e., (1) untrammeled, (2) natural, (3) undeveloped, (4) solitude, and (5) other - as identified in the Public Scoping Meeting Powerpoint presented on January 6, 2016).

One of the "potential management issues" identified in the public scoping documents included reevaluation of the need for commercial services within wilderness. In 2015, four commercial use authorizations were issued to fishing guide companies and we urge this current level of authorizations to continue. Sporting businesses are often a staple in mountain towns or "gateway communities," and serve to provide sustainable and responsible guided use of aquatic resources. In general, fishing guides are highly respectful to public lands and most knowledgeable of fishing regulations, proper fish handling, and general landscape stewardship. They serve a valuable purpose in preserving the Yosemite's wilderness character.

Trout Unlimited and the undersigned stakeholders are committed to protecting and restoring the unique fish and wildlife and habitat values of Yosemite Wilderness. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Wilderness Plan revision process and would like to work cooperatively with the Park Service on the issues discussed above, and to help achieve ecologically sustainable, fiscally realistic, and enforceable management of Park resources for the future.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 652 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value wilderness as a designation in the US. There are not many other countries in the world that protect their natural environment like we have with strict rules defining what wilderness is. Yosemite National Park in no exception. Outside of the Yosemite Valley, the wilderness areas of the park have changed very little from the time John Muir visited and roamed these hills.

Topic Question 2:

In order for people to value wilderness, they need access to it. Time spent in Yosemite Wilderness creates lasting impressions on everyone that visits. The current system doesn't not provide diverse opportunities for visitors who might choose to access the wilderness with a guide.

Comments: Trained professional mountain guides are stewards of the land, teaching others how to protect and preserve the environment. Modern professional guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness. Currently, rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in the Yosemite wilderness, and the plans analysis of commercial services should reflect that and provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public. However the additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for small business and sole proprietors to obtain. Criteria for obtaining CUAs should reflect the highest professional terrain specific credentials. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, espouse stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are specifically the AMGA Rock Guide, AMGA Alpine Guide and the IFMGA Mountain Guide.

Correspondence ID: 653 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I like access to the many wilderness areas that one can access at Yosemite.

Topic Question 2:

I do not think that the current system provides enough diverse opportunities for people to access the Yosemite wilderness with guides. I think that the current system does not recognize the formal training that most guides undertake nowadays and the park is underutilizing the opportunities that are presented to it by offering guide services to the public. Modern trained professional guides are stewards of the land and the wilderness resource. Additional rock climbing and mountaineering opportunities should be made available through the use of low ratio commercial use authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors or small businesses to obtain. The highest selection criteria should be used to obtain a CUA such as those provided by the American Mountain Guide Association and the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations. Also, the park service should provide special use permits for educational institutions such as universities and colleges so they can access the wilderness to provide valuable educational opportunities for

their students.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 654 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I travel all over the United States and ride my horses on federal, state, and private properties. I have seen management plans that work well and some the fail miserably. It seems to me that all user groups have benefitted in the present plan. Riding horses/mules allows people to see parts of our great nation and Yosemite that one would never be able to do on foot. Education of all user groups is a key component for all to see the great opportunities that abound with all modes of transportation.

Topic Question 2:

Fair and realistic access to all user groups. Before horses/mules are excluded from specific areas for reasons proper research needs to be done. Two studies can be referenced which one was done in Yosemite. Dr. Rob Atwill DVM PhD at UC-Davis titled Science & Research on Pack Stock and Waterborne Pathogens. Dr. Stith T Gower and Horses and Invasive Plants Western USA Study. To help ease conflict amounts user groups proper education is of utmost importance. I'm sure BCHA and AERC would be happy to help educate the general public with horses. One user group can not be given preference over another.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 655 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 15:21:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the NPS attempts to retain a wilderness feeling to the undeveloped parts of the park. I hope that the future of management considers that freedom is a core component of wilderness. I think the policies should attempt to allow the maximim possible feeling of freedom for park users, so long as "impact" can be adequately managed.

Topic Question 2:

Use will only increase as time goes on. It is important that the public be well educated on the use of wilderness.

Comments: Of the many components of your Wilderness Stewardship Plan, I am specifically interested to comment on commercial services.

1) Yosemite, and public land in general, should be managed with only the minimum numbers and types of restrictions necessary to protect both the environment and the user experience. One of the goals of a well-managed wilderness is to allow people to feel a sense of freedom. The American public is currently being segregated into two separate categories in the view of the NPS: guided public and non-guided public. I think it goes against the very principles of Wilderness that public who choose to engage a guide should be more restricted than the public who do not choose that option.

Furthermore I think it is in the best interest of the NPS to foster a system in which the public can experience their public lands in the safest and most responsible way possible. For many people the best option to have both a safe and educational experience is with a licensed guide.

As the NPS is no doubt aware, there exists an international licensing body which oversees the profession of Mountain Guides. It is, in fact, the only international licensing body and it is composed of member countries each of which have a national office and licensing procedure which is vetted. In America we have the American Mountain Guide's Association. Within that organization there are two "licenses" or "certifications" which are suitable for work in Yosemite wilderness: AMGA Rock guide, and AMGA Alpine guide. As well, the full international license, the IFMGA Mountain Guide.

Although no US court case has established a precedent so far, at some point the NPS could be considered negligent and therefore liable for damages as a result of permitting non-licensed guides to operate commercially on public lands, despite having the knowledge that the industry world-wide has required licensed guides. This argument means that when considering a new CUA or other similar type of process for offering access to qualified guides, there must be a minimum legal requirement that the guide be licensed by AMGA and/or IFMGA.

There is enormous benefit to the NPS to outsource the vetting process to the international body, the IFMGA, and its US member, the AMGA. The benefits include first and foremost ensuring that the public is in safe hands, and that the public resource, the land, is being stewarded by professionals with the highest possible standards of safety, resource conservations, and LNT practices.

The benefits I am talking about are so evident that many countries such as Canada, France, Italy, Switzerland, New Zealand, Germany, Peru, and numerous others, require that guides hold IFMGA license, or national equivalent.

In short the guided public and the NPS wins because their best interest are served: a well-managed, understood, and protected resource, and a safe public.

The NPS has noted that on the vast majority of routes in the Yosemite wilderness areas, especially those which would be frequented by low-ratio groups of one guide and one or two guests, are underutilized by the current commercial-use allowances.

The restriction of commercial use to a single "concessionaire," the Yosemite Mountaineering School, is simply an outdated practice that if challenged legally would show that NPS is supporting a business monopoly and is therefore illegal. Outside of managing the limited resource there is no good argument to restrict free and fair competition for licensed guides in the National Park.

The current concession system makes obvious sense for services which require a local infrastructure, but not for activities such as mountain guiding which don't require any local infrastructure. Therefore mountain guiding activities should be considered outside of the concession's monopoly use allowance.

Conclusion:

-Large amounts of climbing in Yosemite wilderness are underused by the public

-The current commercial allowances are among the most (unnecessarily) restrictive of any public lands in America. This severely prohibits the guided public from accessing the Yosemite Wilderness areas. Additionally the NPS is possible supporting a monopoly where it isn't necessary or, probably, legal.

-NPS should not segregate access to public based on how they choose to experience their public lands (guided versus non-guided)

-Guiding should be done solely by licensed guides, (IFMGA, AMGA Rock Guide, AMGA Alpine Guide), in the interest of public safety and preventing the NPS from being liable for negligence in future lawsuits.

-A simple CUA system should be installed that meets the needs of guides and makes the process simple for the park

-The NPS should work with a panel of licensed guides to come up with a system that will be functional for the public and simple for the NPS to manage.

-Once a new plan is reached and implemented, it should have a mechanism to allow for revision of processes to adjust for underuse or overuse, and/or to revise the process for issuing access to visiting guides.

Correspondence ID: 656 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I mailed a hard copy of my comment letter to the Superintendent's office as well as emailing a copy to Kathleen Morse. Thank-you.

Correspondence ID: 657 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 15:34:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I value the fact that the National Park Service is managing the Yosemite Wilderness as best as they can within an antiquated system that is in need of revision.

Topic Question 2:

I believe that the most important issue facing the Yosemite Wilderness is that more and more people are wanting to utilize it. This in turn creates a host of problems from trail and campsite overuse to degradation of the wilderness experience. A large part of these users have no idea how to travel and camp in the wilderness in such a way as to minimize their impact!!

Comments: Here are my thought in regards to the public scoping period of the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

Wilderness has long been one of the most cherished and celebrated features of the American experience. For many Americans it has become embedded in our culture and has a large impact on how we think of our country. No wilderness has been more influential to that end than those within in the boundaries of Yosemite National Park. For these reasons we should take any revision of the Wilderness Plan seriously and with all due diligence for the sake of the future of this natural resource.

With that in mind I would like to offer the following thoughts with regards to the important issue of increased use of the wilderness by the public and my thoughts on how it can be addressed.

☞ I strongly encourage Yosemite National Park to expand commercial guiding in the areas of technical rock and alpine environments. It is my belief that accomplished guides/guide services provide a well-rounded wilderness experience that both minimizes impacts from its guest as well as increases safety.

☞ Commercial guiding operations should be opened up to encourage a greater variety of terrain options to guests. Under the current system it hard for visitors to the park to find all of the options of technical rock, ski, and alpine recreation. There is nowhere on the web to find guided options such as technical alpine climbing and technical ski mountaineering within the park.

☞ Certification or equivalent experience should only be one part of the requirement for technical guiding in Yosemite's wilderness. In order to protect the natural resources the NPS should look for long standing stable companies who have a good history of operating in the National Park System.

☞ I believe that Yosemite should expand the permit system to local companies who are familiar with Yosemite's history and ecosystem. Permittees should be companies that are already aware of the unique problems and challenges faced in the Yosemite Wilderness.

☞ There is a need for rock, alpine, and ski guide services that can serve multiple cultures and languages. Yosemite National Park is not a destination solely for English speaking Americans but is also an icon visited by guest from worldwide. I believe that there should be at least some commercial guiding operations who can safely and respectfully guide guests in other languages. Through these means foreign guests can have a positive safe experience while learning and protecting park resources.

☞ Yosemite National Park should extent permits to companies who specialize in guiding guests with disabilities. The current plan makes it difficult to find a guide who specializes in guiding persons with disabilities in technical terrain. I believe by expanding the permit system Yosemite could do a better job of creating reasonable accommodation as outlined in the ADA.

☞ I encourage the park to avoid companies that employee guides as subcontractors or "1099 employees". History has shown that it is hard to manage liability and often these subcontractors do not have their own liability insurance or workers comp. In effect passing on the liability of accident or incident onto the NPS.

In closing I know that Yosemite National Park staff will do what's best for the park and its visitors. Thank you for your efforts in the scoping process and we look forward to seeing what you decide.

Correspondence ID: 658 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Please see complete scoping letter

Topic Question 2:
Please see complete scoping letter

Comments: January 29, 2016

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA) and Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) appreciate this opportunity to provide the following scoping comments regarding the parks Wilderness Stewardship Plan (WSP). We applaud the parks public outreach efforts to date that include public meetings in Berkeley, at Yosemite National Park, and via several webinar forums that allowed the participation of persons unable to attend the meetings.

About Back Country Horsemen

Our mission is to perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America's back country and wilderness and to ensure that public lands remain open to recreational stock use. A large part of our mission includes assisting the various government agencies and non-profit organizations in the maintenance and management of public trails and horse camps, and to educate, encourage and solicit active participation in sustainable use of the back country resource by horsemen and women and the general public commensurate with our heritage.

We work in cooperation with government agencies to help clear trails, maintain historic sites, assist ecological restoration activities, sponsor educational seminars and clinics, and assist with service projects as requested. In 2014 alone, BCHA volunteers documented in-kind contributions to the tune of approximately \$14.4 million for various projects throughout the nation. BCHA currently maintains a 5-year general agreement with the National Park Service, signed by Director Jarvis in August 2014. The agreement provides a framework for cooperation wherein BCHA units can work with local park units on mutually-beneficial projects, including training seminars, living history events, ecological restoration activities, Leave No Trace" equine education programs, and service projects including trail and horse camp maintenance.

Several BCH chapters currently maintain unit-specific Memorandums of Understanding with the National Park Service. Examples include Buffalo National River and Great Smoky Mountains and Mammoth Cave national parks, where local BCHA units are authorized to conduct light trail and campsite maintenance and to assist in search and rescue operations. We strongly encourage Yosemite staff to tier from the national BCHA-NPS Agreement and consider how it might partner with BCHC units to complete trail maintenance and other stewardship projects within Yosemite National Park. The Superintendent of Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks, for example, recently met with BCHCs High Sierra Unit to discuss a partnership to develop front country horse camps approved via the parks recently completed WSP.

We greatly appreciate and value the recreational experience provided to horsemen and users of recreational pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park. We take seriously our responsibility to demonstrate BCHAs ethic and commitment to preserving wilderness character. This includes BCHAs Leave No Trace Stock Users Education Program. BCHA has become the primary trainer of stock users in Leave No Trace principles and practices nationally through our Leave No Trace Masters Education Program. The program is a partnership between BCHA, state and affiliate members, the U.S. Forest Service the Leave No Trace™ Center for Outdoor Ethics. Significantly, in 2015, BCHC was selected by the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California) for a five-year contact to serve as the sole provider of the agencies Leave No Trace™ Equine Master Educator Course.

Cultural Significance of Recreational Stock Use

The use of pack stock has played an important role in American culture. There is a long tradition of using pack and saddle stock not only in Yosemite National Park but throughout the West. BCHA carries on this tradition in modern times, as does the robust and highly-respected pack stock program administered by Yosemite National Park that is used in support of park management and scientific investigation. Today's horsemen and women relish this cultural heritage and readily embrace the responsibility and obligation to care for our parks and public lands through application of traditional methods and a primitive mode of travel.

We recognize the seemingly conflicting policy directives under which the NPS operates, including the 1916 Organic Act and 1964 Wilderness Act, and the demanding task the agency faces in simultaneously devoting much of the park to recreation while also protecting wilderness character. BCHA is committed to the long-term sustainable management of Wilderness in a way that ensures compatible recreational uses are allowed to occur to perpetuate the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. Our specific comments on the Yosemite WSP follow.

Guiding Principle

In preparing the WSP one of the guiding principles should be that horseback riding, including the use of pack stock and mules, are primitive, non-mechanized modes of travel that are appropriate in Wilderness and consistent with the purposes and provisions of the Wilderness Act. These are historic and culturally significant uses that preceded congressional designation of current park Wilderness (1984) and the establishment of the park itself. In other words, horseback riding, packing and hiking have occurred in harmony within current boundaries of what is now park Wilderness for well over a century and a half. These sentiments are confirmed by wording included in the parks 1989 Wilderness Management Plan, which states the following:

Stock - horses, mules, and burros - has been an historically important factor in the use and enjoyment of Yosemite wilderness and remains a significant recreational activity. Wilderness designation increases the importance of stock for National Park Service administrative and maintenance purposes by restricting aircraft alternatives (p. 22, emphasis added).

Purpose of the Plan

According to the parks November 2015 newsletter announcing the public scoping period:

The purpose of this planning effort is to review the management direction in the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Plan and update it as necessary to better align

with contemporary use patterns and National Park Service policy.

It is our understanding that the baseline datum against which all wilderness management activities will be compared in the WSP is the date when Public Law 98-425, the California Wilderness Act of 1984, was enacted. In other words, the goal of the WSP will be to restore, protect, and enhance overall wilderness character of the Yosemite Wilderness using as a baseline those conditions that existed in 1984, when Congress deemed 677,600 acres (and potential wilderness additions) within the park as suitable for designation as Wilderness. We would appreciate clarification in the Draft WSP as to the timeline by which the Park Service has established its baseline datum.

Range of Alternatives

The 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Management Plan makes no mention of documented resource concerns or documented incidents of user conflict associated with the use of pack stock. We acknowledge this may or may not be the case at present, but we have yet to see any indication by the National Park Service that such concerns or conflict, to the extent that they have been documented, are either widespread or amount to a level of concern that would necessitate significant changes in the parks management of pack stock. As described further below, the issue of open meadow grazing may represent one exception.

Our understanding is that pack stock use by private parties has decreased substantially since park Wilderness was designated in 1984. It would follow that the potential for adverse or unacceptable impacts resulting from stock use on Wilderness trails would therefore be lessened at present than the WSP baseline datum of 1984. Further, we are not aware of Park Service documentation of unacceptable impacts-be it to water quality, cultural or natural resources-that can be attributed to use of horse and pack stock in park Wilderness. Thus, it appears to us that any WSP alternative that includes proposals to either significantly reduce available trail miles, impose broad camping restrictions, or otherwise restrict pack stock use would be unwarranted and unjustifiable. We therefore request that the WSP refrain from proposing alternatives that substantially limit or restrict the use of pack stock in the absence of verifiable data to demonstrate that park Wilderness is experiencing overuse or unacceptable impacts as a result of pack stock use.

Need for Data on Recreational Use and Trends to Shape WSP Alternatives

To better understand use trends and the context of pack stock use in park Wilderness, we recommend inclusion of a table in the draft WSP that outlines the following:

" Total trail miles available for hiking/backpacking and total trail miles available for private stock use in 1984 (or date closely matching Wilderness designation at Yosemite National Park);

" Total trail miles currently available for hiking/backpacking and total trail miles available for pack stock use (including private, commercial and administrative stock use);

" Total trail miles proposed to be available for hiking/backpacking and total trail miles proposed to be available for pack stock use for each WSP action alternative.

We respectfully request that the draft WSP include also a table depicting overall use levels (i.e., annual visitation), per trail user group, beginning the year park Wilderness was established to the most current date for which data is available. In other words, a table that depicts use levels by hikers, backpackers and recreational stock users from at least 1984 to present. The table will be useful to demonstrate trends and any notable changes in trail-related recreational activities within the past 30 years.

Proposal to Limit Use of Pack Stock Must be Supported by Science

It is our understanding that current visitation by private stock users is substantially less today than it was in the 1980s. Again, we would appreciate confirmation of that assumption with data presented in the draft WSP.

In areas of known or recently documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails or trail segments, hardening of trail surfaces, use of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows. As described below, we believe that methods exist to mitigate most any stock-related impact or conflict and which allow the Park Service to maintain a wilderness experience wherein Regulatory restrictions will be minimized to allow as much freedom as possible consistent with wilderness resource objectives, as stated in the parks 1989 Wilderness Management Plan (p. 13). We offer the following issue-specific recommendations.

Pack Stock Grazing in Open Meadows

The WSP should incorporate recent and relevant information on the general lack of pack stock-related impact to park and wilderness resources, such as statements made in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Merced Wild & Scenic River Plan (Draft EIS page 9-195) that summarizes recent surveys, which found that pack stock impacts were absent or uncommon in most subalpine meadows, with the exception of Merced Lake-East, (and for which the Park Service acknowledges is adversely affected by administrative use of pack stock).

We understand that the Park Service increasingly has become concerned about the health and function of subalpine meadow ecosystems, including fens, and the effects of high levels of grazing by pack stock in Yosemite National Park . Yet science-based grazing limits have yet to be established. We ask that the WSP describe the current state of the science with respect to the effects of pack stock grazing in subalpine meadows within the park and what measures, if any, have proven to be effective in minimizing documented threats to the ecological integrity of fens and meadows.

Whether or not a cause-and-effect relationship can be scientifically documented at this time with respect to pack stock grazing, we encourage park personnel to consult with BCH California and other experts in Equine Leave No Trace™ practices to develop Best Management Practices for meadow grazing that might be analyzed among management alternatives included in the WSP (be it applied to private, commercial and/or administrative uses). In other words, we encourage the NPS to reach out early in the WSP process to knowledgeable outside parties and embrace them as partners in the development of such solutions.

Waterborne Pathogens Resulting from Pack Stock Use (or Lack Thereof)

As part of the WSP scoping process, we encourage park personnel to explore the implications of recent research conducted by Dr. Rob Atwill of the University of California, Davis, including his study of water-borne pathogens in Yosemite National Park. Dr. Atwill's work demonstrates the (insignificant) level by which adult pack stock might shed, via their manure, detectable oocysts of *Cryptosporidium* , a parasite that can affect humans. Dr. Atwill's research also demonstrates that native mammals at Yosemite, including squirrel, raccoon, marmot and some avian species, are far more likely to be the source of waterborne pathogens than either pack stock or domestic livestock . In one study at Yosemite National Park, Dr. Atwill found that a population of Belding's ground squirrel was documented to shed *Cryptosporidium* oocysts at a rate that might be matched by no less than 3,000 horses. The WSP should consider the implications of scientific findings and recommendations made by Dr. Atwill and others to shed light on appropriate measures to employ, if any, in the WSP to mitigate the potential negative effects and spread of waterborne zoonotic pathogens and parasites. According to personal communications with Dr. Atwill, an individual's personal hygiene habits-and whether they wash/disinfect their hands effectively after digging/using a cat hole or pit toilet-is the greatest factor in avoiding zoonotic pathogens and parasites in the Yosemite Wilderness.

Noxious/Invasive Weeds Resulting from Pack Stock Use (or Lack Thereof)

As part of the WSP scoping process, we encourage park personnel to explore the implications of recent research conducted by Dr. Stith T. Gower of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Dr. Gower's studies indicate that horses and pack stock are unlikely, if at all, to spread invasive weeds along trails under the conditions he studied in the U.S. in both eastern ecosystems and nine western ecosystems, including the Sierra Nevada. For example, his 2013 study of western ecosystems concludes with the following statement:

The 0% germination and establishment rate of weeds from hay, manure and hoof debris plots on the horse trails at the nine study sites illustrates the difficult physical and environmental conditions that seedlings experience during the critical germination and establishment phase.

Consequently, although the science has found that horses and pack stock are capable of excreting seeds (both native and non-native) along backcountry trails, such seeds face harsh conditions and are highly unlikely to germinate. Based on recent studies by Dr. Gower, the WSP should start with the assumption that the use of horses and pack stock is not considered as a significant vector for the spread of invasive or noxious weeds. The WSP should consider the implications of scientific findings by Dr. Gower and others that shed light on appropriate measures to employ, if any, in the WSP to mitigate the potential negative effects and spread of noxious or invasive weeds.

Development of WSP Alternatives with Respect to Recreational Carrying Capacity Must Follow Relevant NPS Policies

It is not clear at this time whether the WSP will analyze specific carrying capacity limits for recreational uses in Yosemite Wilderness or whether it will continue to focus instead on existing trailhead quotas. If the former is to be applied, please keep in mind that current NPS Management Policies describe a series of steps to be taken by park superintendents in order to determine visitor carrying capacity (Section 8.2.1). Only after that process has completed its course, such as via the current WSP, should decisions to restrict an otherwise appropriate visitor use be considered. NPS policy regarding visitor carrying capacity can be summarized as follows:

1. Superintendents will identify ways to monitor for and address unacceptable impacts on park resources and visitor experiences.
 2. The level of analysis necessary to make decisions about carrying capacities is commensurate with the potential impacts or consequences of the decisions. The greater the potential for significant impacts or consequences on park resources and values or the opportunities to enjoy them, the greater the level of study and analysis and civic engagement needed to support the decisions.
 3. If and when park uses reach a level at which they must be limited or curtailed, the preferred choice will be to continue uses that are encouraged under the criteria listed in section 8.2, and to limit or curtail those that least meet those criteria.
- NPS Management Policies, Section 8.2.1, emphasis added.

Section 8.2, Visitor Use, of the NPS Management Policies defines unacceptable impacts on park resources and visitor experiences as impacts that, individually or cumulatively, would:

- " be inconsistent with a park's purposes or values, or
- " impede the attainment of a park's desired conditions for natural and cultural resources as identified through the park's planning process, or
- " create an unsafe or unhealthy environment for visitors or employees, or
- " diminish opportunities for current or future generations to enjoy, learn about, or be inspired by park resources or values, or
- " unreasonably interfere with park programs or activities, or an appropriate use, or the atmosphere of peace and tranquility, or the natural soundscape maintained in wilderness and natural, historic, or commemorative locations within the park, or NPS concessioner or contractor operations or services.

Emphasis added. We view these definitions as very descriptive and useful and we recommend they be applied in the current WSP effort irrespective of whether specific carrying capacity analyses will be conducted.

The policies go on to state the following:

If and when a superintendent has a reasonable basis for believing that an ongoing or proposed public use would cause unacceptable impacts to park resources or values, the superintendent must make adjustments to the way the activity is conducted to eliminate the unacceptable impacts. If the adjustments do not succeed in eliminating the unacceptable impacts, the superintendent may (1) temporarily or permanently close a specific area, or (2) place limitations on the use, or (3) prohibit the use (Section 8.2, emphasis added).

At present, we feel there is no reasonable basis for WSP alternatives that place limitations on recreational pack stock use in park Wilderness in the absence of compelling data on the existence of unacceptable impacts on park resources or use of pack stocks unreasonable interference with the visitor experience of other uses. We recommend that NPS personnel incorporate these criteria into the shaping of management alternatives in the WSP that are relevant to address pressing wilderness management needs while meeting the National Environmental Policy Act's requirement to explore in detail a reasonable range of alternatives.

Use of Adaptive Management in Lieu of WSP Alternative-based Restrictions

Should the NPS find adequate justification for detailed analyses of WSP alternatives that restrict either the use of saddle and pack stock (or hiking/backpacking for that matter), we encourage the Park Service to disclose the body of science being relied upon to form the basis of the proposed restrictions. Moreover, references in the WSP to the scientific literature should discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

As an alternative to restrictions proposed to these uses in the WSP, we propose the application of adaptive management techniques like visitor education and interpretive opportunities, the rerouting of segments of trail where conflicts are known to occur or other less onerous restrictions including quotas regarding either the number of parties or temporal zoning-in lieu of WSP alternatives that begin with an assumption that public recreational access must somehow be limited. If warranted, existing adaptive management frameworks like Limits of Acceptable Change (and the NPS version, Visitor Experience and Resource Protection) could be employed in the WSP in order to lay a foundation for the collection of visitor data on potential user conflicts and management options to minimize or avoid conflict before such issues reach critical thresholds.

Use of Social Science Must Take into Account the Views of Stock Users

If social science literature is to be used to determine social carrying capacity, we would ask that the science is even-handed with respect to whose perceptions are being taken into account in making management decisions (i.e., hikers, horsemen or both). We strenuously object to closures proposed for the use of pack stock based on narrowly-applied studies from which the social preferences of backpackers and hikers is either cited or implied. For example, limitations proposed for stock use should not be justified as necessary to enhance the enjoyment of solitude by users who prefer not to share trails with stock and stock users.

Rarely do we see social science that takes into account also the views and desired experience of traditional horsemen and stock users. Accordingly, we hope and expect that any application of social science in the WSP to be balanced with respect the range of Wilderness visitors whose opinions have been sought. We remain optimistic that most types of visitor conflict can be resolved through education and broader awareness of the history and role of horse and pack stock use in the park. What remains clear, however, is that both the level and measurements regarding the intensity of reported visitor perceptions of conflict in the Yosemite Wilderness associated with the use of pack stock have substantially decreased over time.

Restrictions to Recreational Uses Must be Limited to the Minimum Necessary

With regard to mitigating adverse impacts from or between park uses, NPS Management Policies (2006, Section 8.1.2) state:

In all cases, impacts from park uses must be avoided, minimized, or mitigated through one or more of the following methods:

- " visitor education and civic engagement
- " temporal, spatial, or numerical limitations on the use
- " the application of best available technology
- " the application of adaptive management techniques

NPS Management Policies (8.2.2 Recreational Activities) further state that Restrictions placed on recreational uses that have been found to be appropriate will be limited to the minimum necessary to protect park resources and values and promote visitor safety and enjoyment (emphasis added). Therefore, we encourage park personnel to consider options to mitigating any real or perceived conflicts associated with recreational stock use in Wilderness prior to including alternatives in the draft WSP oriented toward restrictions in use of pack stock. Doing so would appear consistent with NPS policy, as described above.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

The WSP Should Consider the Logistical Needs of Pack Stock Users

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules. The WSP should also include a discussion of the current availability of, or the need or demand for, additional infrastructure to support camping with pack stock in the Parks front country areas. Such a need can be implied from recent recreational use projections documented by the U.S. Forest Service.

The WSP Should be Viewed as a Vehicle to Engage Partners

Over the anticipated life of the WSP, the Park Service may find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agencies beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either unmaintained or minimally maintained.

In addition, as stated earlier in this scoping letter, park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide Equine Leave No Trace™ (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC remains the sole authorized Equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). We also encourage Yosemite staff to tier from the national BCHA-NPS Agreement and consider in the WSP how it might partner with local BCHC units and other partners to complete trail maintenance and other stewardship projects within Yosemite Wilderness. BCHC has multiple units on both sides of the Sierra Nevada that would happy to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding or other such service-type agreement for the planning, maintenance and upkeep of these facilities.

Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to submit public scoping comments on Yosemite WSP. We appreciate the efforts of park personnel to seek every opportunity to include the pack and saddle stock community in this important planning effort. It is our belief that only through strong partnerships and effective collaboration can our mutual goals of preserving Wilderness character and maintaining publicly-supported trail systems be achieved.

Sincerely,

Citations:

1. Park Operations: Managing overnight stock use at Yosemite National Park: A science-based approach. PARK SCIENCE " VOLUME 28 " NUMBER 3 " WINTER 2011-2012
2. Atwill, E.R. 2008. Hetch Hetchy watershed pack stock and microbial water quality study, University of California, Davis, CA. Report prepared for Yosemite National Park.
3. Atwill, E.R. Environmental loading of *Cryptosporidium* spp. from Belding's ground squirrels and pack stock in Yosemite National Park. International Conference on Diseases of Nature Communicable to Man. Fairbanks, Alaska. August 8-10, 2010.
4. National Park Service, Yosemite National Park, 2008 Pack Stock Use Assessment in Subalpine Meadows of the Tuolumne River Watershed. November 2010. Resources Management and Science, Yosemite National Park.
5. Gower, ST. 2008. Are horses responsible for introducing nonnative plants along forest trails in the eastern United States? *Forest Ecology & Management* 256:997-1003.
6. Horses and Invasive Plants: The Western USA Study by Dr. Stith T. Gower, Professor of Forest Ecosystem Ecology, Department of Forest & Wildlife Ecology. University of Wisconsin-Madison. (note: the article originally appeared in the April 2013 issue of *Endurance News*, official publication of the American Endurance Ride Conference, www.aerc.org)
7. Social Science Program, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Visitor Services Project: Yosemite National Park Visitor Study, Summer 2005. Prepared by the University of Idaho Park Studies Unit. Visitor Services Project Report 168.

8. See 'Outdoor recreation trends and futures, <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/40453>

Correspondence ID: 659 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 16:05:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I would like the opportunity to experience the outdoors with private guides, particularly trained mountain guides, in Yosemite. Many of my best experiences in the outdoors have been with AMGA certified guides working privately or for small businesses. Expanding the guide permits to smaller private guides and groups would help me explore more places and have better experiences in Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 660 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 16:06:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Hi,

Thank you for your excellent work so far in conducting this planning process. My comment is about meadow wetlands and how they are portrayed in the plan. Would like to see acknowledgement that large portions of Yosemite's backcountry meadows are wetlands. Would like to see careful evaluation of wetland impacts, including wetland mapping, where there could be impacts to meadows.

Correspondence ID: 661 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Having not visited the park I cannot comment as to the good things the park has done.

Topic Question 2:

Guided rock climbing and recreational base jumping access. Guided climbing should be allowed through on an individual and company level. Certifications should be required for the level of terrain accessed. AMGA should preferably be certifying body in the US.

Base jumping could be allowed on specific days or from specific points. The current outright ban on base jumping is not working.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 662 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 16:32:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have probably spent more time in Yosemite's Wilderness than in any other unit of the NWPS. I have hiked through it on the PCT, hiked from Tuolumne Meadows to the Valley perhaps three times, and completed the High Sierra Loop, staying at the HS Camps, twice. I am pleased that so much of Yosemite's backcountry is designated as Wilderness. In general, I have been pleased with the park's efforts to keep Wilderness naturally wild. When I first did the T. Meadows to Valley hike in the 1950's, people camped right on the shore of Merced Lake. I am pleased that the park has better controlled visitor use in such sensitive locations. I also have been pleased to note the efforts around the High Sierra Camps to restore vegetation by controlling where people walk.

Topic Question 2:

At the top of my list of issues is to ensure the NPS itself fully respects and follows the letter and spirit of the Wilderness Act. There should not be a double standard under which NPS tells the public it can't do certain things in Wilderness while doing some of those things itself. I do not really know to what extent this has happened in Yosemite, but I know it has happened in many parts of the NWPS. No helicopters, no power tools, no structures unless there is no feasible alternative AND the purpose of such activity is the preservation of Wilderness itself.

Other concerns: 1. Research is a legitimate use of Wilderness, but it must always comply with the Wilderness Act. No motorized access, no structures left behind, etc. 2. Impact of stock. Horses and mules have impacts on trails and areas where they are kept. Please evaluate ways to reduce this impact. And not just direct impacts. For example, many recently rebuilt trails seemed to be designed with stock use in mind: steps often are high for humans on foot. 3. Overuse in places. I generally do not believe that use by people is a big problem in Yosemite Wilderness. But clearly it is having undesirable impacts in specific locations. Some designated campgrounds are basically stripped of vegetation (e.g., Merced) and there are instances of multiple parallel trails in meadows as well as social trails at popular destinations. I would like to see a review of policies regarding designated campsites, use of fires, party size, and backcountry allocations so as to minimize such problems. I have mixed feelings about the installation of bear boxes in Wilderness. It may be necessary in some locations, but perhaps not others. 4. High Sierra Camps. I realize some feel strongly that these camps are out of place. But they pre-date Wilderness, and I view them as a unique opportunity to help people enjoy, appreciate and understand Wilderness as an American concept. This opportunity needs to be better used. Every visitor to a camp should be exposed to some information about Wilderness and his/her place in it. At the same time, careful consideration should be given to possible steps to limit the camps' impacts on the surrounding Wilderness, including reducing access by stock if appropriate and controlling inappropriate activities by camp staff (e.g., use of rafts/boats kept at the camp on Merced Lake). 5. Nonconforming structures. Other than the HS Camps, any existing non-conforming structures should be removed and no new structures should be allowed, including for research and resource management. 6. Commercial activities. As you note, you must assess the need for and appropriateness for commercial services within the Wilderness. Such uses, where allowed, should be consistent with the Wilderness Act. 7. As you develop alternatives, each one should be consistent with the intent of the Wilderness Act, sustain the wilderness character of the area, and call for improvements in the park's management of all uses allowed under the Wilderness Act.

Comments: Wilderness is what is most valuable about Yosemite National Park, in my view. Wilderness is a place where we - people in general, individual users, and managers - are not in control. We should experience and accept nature on its own terms there. We should exercise restraint always in both use and management and honor Wilderness as it is and as natural processes dictate it will be in the future.

Please keep me informed of additional opportunities to comment as this planning proceeds.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 663 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I really appreciate the parks concern to protecting our shared natural resources and wilderness areas.

Comments: Greetings,

I would like to submit a comment regarding the profession of mountain guiding in the National Parks System and specifically Yosemite. I would like to see the National Park system provide more diverse opportunities for guests who would like to hire a professional rock/mountain guide. Professional guides that have been trained within the AMGA certification standards are trained professionals the help to educate the general public to better protect and conserve our treasured natural areas. It's unfortunate, both for guests and professional guides, to monopolize the guiding opportunities to only a few companies, especially since the rock and mountaineering opportunities are not at capacity in the Yosemite wilderness. Having a more diverse set of mountain guides allows for more options for the guests and guides to enjoy the natural amenities the park has to offer.

I believe additional rock and mountaineering opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio commercial use authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small business professionals to purchase and use. The AMGA training provides guides with the highest professional terrain specific credentials. This means park visitors/the guide's client will have a high quality and safe experience and be educated on stewardship issues and reducing the physical and social impact on the land.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 664 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 16:40:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Clearly the Park Service has an incredible challenge balancing the demands of the constituent user groups while maintaining something of a wilderness environment. I appreciate the fact that the Park Service is reaching out to the public for comments on the plan.

Topic Question 2:

Managing crowds.

How addressed: Bring in more bears? Seriously though, I wish I had the answer.

Comments: I would appreciate more opportunities for guided climbing in the Park, especially from highly trained and experienced guides (e.g. AMGA / IFMGA). Climbing is a very personal activity and the trust required between partners is extremely high. It would be great to be able to use certified guides who I have an existing relationship with for climbs in the Park

Correspondence ID: 665 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The Park Service does a good job in ensuring visitors the opportunity for solitude, if they wish. Although there is some evidence of over-use and abuse, such as illegal fire-rings and deteriorating trails, these can be addressed by public/private partnerships and increased patrols.

Topic Question 2:

The under-use of the wilderness, not the over-use, as evidenced by the very small fraction of total park visitors that actually spend any time in the wilderness, is an issue that should be addressed. Overly restrictive quotas in the peak summer months keep many visitors from experiencing the backcountry. A revamped system could increase visitation without negatively affecting wilderness characteristics.

Comments: Commercial hiking and backpacking services are essential to maintaining the wilderness characteristics of Yosemite's designated wilderness. Guiding services introduce those unable or unwilling to experience the wilderness on their own to the magnificent country that we are so fortunate to have. They do this while preserving wilderness values by teaching and practicing the principles of Leave No Trace and effecting the Park's rules and regulations. Additionally, these services educate the public in the Park's human and natural history, thus instilling in the visitor a long term appreciation for this incomparable landscape and the wilderness values that it embodies.

The Park Services faces a difficult task in balancing the needs of the visiting public while maintaining the wilderness characteristics of Yosemite's backcountry. For the most part, they have succeeded. Although, there is evidence of overuse and crowding in some small portions of the park, I believe that commercial use levels can be maintained at present levels or increased with no detrimental effects on the wilderness. Additionally, I support expanding the number of backcountry visitors by revamping the quota system and expanding and improving the existing trail system.

Correspondence ID: 666 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I appreciate that it regulates the impact climbers and campers may have on the area and is supportive of large community-focused clean-ups such as Facelift.

Topic Question 2:

Continued management of tourists/visitors and climbing interest groups. Small group sizes and limiting access to climbing areas is not necessarily a guarantee for greater preservation and protection of the park.

1. Grant access to larger groups (at least 10) into the Wilderness

As an Instructor, Climber and Course Director for Outward Bound for over the past ten years, I can attest to the fact that our courses offer people of all ages and various backgrounds and means the opportunity to experience personal self-discovery and greater appreciation of our natural resources. Our courses are tailored to offering opportunities of challenge and growth, while educating people about Leave No Trace and how to be responsible stewards of the land.

Due to group size restrictions we are limited in taking groups into true wilderness (as most Outward Bound groups function more effectively at sizes of 8 students and up).

2. Allow climbing access to other qualified and responsible commercial groups.

Our students are not able to climb on their courses in the park due to rules against access for all commercial groups outside of Yosemite Mountain School. Many of our staff are trained and certified by the AMGA and qualified to safely and effectively offer valuable climbing experiences to students. (We run similar courses in Joshua Tree and maintain good standing with the park by ensuring all necessary certification/group requirements are met).

Comments: Thank you for being willing and open to re-structuring the way Yosemite National Park may be accessed and contributed to (positively) by the public.

Correspondence ID: 667 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
That they let climbers climb on their beautiful terrain.

Topic Question 2:

Allow more camping, for longer visits.

Comments: Please allow more concessions for guiding in YNP.

Correspondence ID: 668 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Minarets pack Station
Ansel Adams Wilderness of the northern Sierra National Forest
& Southern Yosemite National Park
Operated under USFS and NPS permits

January 29, 2016

Dear Yosemite National Park,

I am a new owner of the Minarets Pack Station (MPS) located just south of YNP at Miller Meadow in the Sierra National Forest. MPS operates under permits with in YSP as well as in Sierra and Inyo National Forests.

As a permitted pack stock outfitter, we very much support continued use of stock in the Yosemite Wilderness, whether said stock originates from commercial permitted outfitters like us or private stock owners. Historically, stock have been an integral part of all Yosemite Wilderness Plans. Stock supported trips enable older or younger people, including families with smaller children to access and enjoy the "wilderness experience." We believe that well managed stock trips that adopt leave no trace (LNT) practices will provide many of these clients experiences that lay the foundations for life about the importance of this National treasure and the value of stewarding this wilderness.

We at the MPS follow, with great care, all stated regulations for all aspects of wilderness protection.

In our view, one of the most problematic issues that YNP, as well as all of the west's national forests, faces is the vast amount of dead pine trees that have died over the last 2 - 3 years of drought. Management of these trees will be paramount to maintain the good health of our Yosemite Wilderness.

Thank You for this opportunity to comment on the Yosemite Wilderness Plan.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 669 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 17:00:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the tradition of providing interpretive service in the high country through ranger-naturalist led hikes on the High Sierra Loop trail and of the public access to the High Sierra Camps, which allows people of average means and physical abilities to access these unique places of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

Topic Question 2:

I am concerned about the efforts of a narrow band of outdoor enthusiasts to limit public access to the wilderness to people with the physical abilities and knowledge to be entirely self-sufficient. There are many areas of National Park wilderness available to such people, but very, very few available to those of us who possess neither the ability to do wilderness camping on our own nor to hire expensive private guides. The impacts of the High Sierra Camps have been exaggerated beyond all reason, and it is incumbent upon the NPS to continue to support these camps, which provide public access to the wilderness by a wide variety of people, especially older people and people with some limiting disabilities, and not preserve the National Park wilderness for an elite group of extremely fit, knowledgeable, mostly young people, and/or people wealthy enough to hire private guides and human sumpters.

Comments: I am most concerned that we preserve access to all the High Sierra Camps via the Loop Trail, as a tradition in support of the National Park Service mission and as a place of cultural association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

I have a deep regard for the dual missions of the National Park Service of preservation and enjoyable access. Yosemite's High Sierra Camps have provided access to many who could never access the wilderness experience without some assistance. Hiking the Loop trail has been the most transformative experience of my life. I therefore do not support of the series of alternative concepts presented over the past few years which propose the elimination of wilderness camping infrastructure and related stock use, which would foreclose the possibility of completing the High Sierra Loop in a ranger-guided group. The limits placed on Glen Aulin occupancy, already the smallest camp, are extremely troubling in this regard.

In 2006, I was present at Merced High Sierra Camp when a tremendous storm broke. Many backpackers were flooded out, and hikers who made it in to camp thought that they might have died had the camp not been there to provide shelter. Merced Camp has provided an important way station for people accessing the wilderness for many years with relatively low impact, especially compared to what is available in the Valley. Likewise, May Lake and Glen Aulin provide access to those who may be able to hike a shorter distance only. But all the camps are needed to complete the entire loop.

For me, and the folks I've met on those hikes, the High Sierra Camps exemplify the best of what the National Parks have to offer. The camps support the dual missions of the National Parks: to preserve scenic beauty, and to provide access for the public's enjoyment. The interpretive education provided by the naturalist ranger on a guided hike is unparalleled, preserving an important cultural wilderness tradition that is not replaceable by management frameworks which prioritize a total self-sufficiency available to only a narrow range of the completely able-bodied public.

Correspondence ID: 670 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

The NPS clearly recognizes that there are many different and diverse groups of users visiting the park. Managing the needs and concerns of all groups is important and something that the NPS seems to be actively trying to achieve.

Topic Question 2:

Inevitably, different users are going to have different concerns for how the park is managed. Allowing professionally certified guides to operate more widely within the park will ensure that users are given a quality experience, while maintaining the highest possible level of safety and also encouraging a respectful and responsible attitude with regard to preservation and access.

Comments: Allowing more open access to the professional guiding community to operate commercially within the park will result in a positive impact on the park. As a group, properly certified guides uphold a standard of professionalism and care for the environment that is significantly lacking in the growing population of both climbers and non-climbers, as outdoor recreation grows rapidly without the historic tradition of mentorship and education.

Correspondence ID: 671 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: January 29, 2016

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

RE: Wilderness Stewardship Plan Scoping

Yosemite Park Superintendent and Staff:

CSERC staff members have spent decades backpacking, hiking, and doing field research in the remarkable Yosemite Wilderness. Our staff has seen firsthand many of the issues and impacts facing the Wilderness in the park. These comments are based upon years of experience hiking on high use trails, encountering pack trains, and visiting both high use destinations and remote corners of Wilderness that most visitors never see. Additionally, CSERC has been involved with all of the Park plans since 1990, and with that experience, has in-depth background about these issues, most recently from our

involvement in both the Merced and Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Plans. Given this background, we ask you to carefully consider the following comments:

High Sierra Camps

At one point the National Park Service managed Yosemite Park in a manner that made access for visitors a high priority, rather than prioritizing protection of wilderness values, rare wildlife, water quality in high elevation tributary streams, and the legal requirement to avoid permanent improvements within a Wilderness. The High Sierra Camps (and their purpose to make wilderness accessible to those who do not want to carry their own gear or prepare their own meals) reflect a philosophical management direction that is no longer consistent with more enlightened Park Service objectives and wilderness management direction of recent decades. In the past, Park Service officials desired to build political support for the Park system and for preservation of wilderness by enticing well-to-do and politically connected visitors. Park management made it convenient for city dwellers to rough it in conveniently located tent cabins with hot meals easily available as at the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge. The High Sierra Camps were created to provide for unnecessary, but desired amenities such as clean beds, wood heat, showers, and hot meals that softened the ruggedness of wilderness camping. The system of High Sierra Camps spread across the heart of Yosemite's Wilderness, and the trails used to access them pass through and provide access to highly desirable recreational and scenic areas. The presence of these islands of non-wilderness within the vast Yosemite Wilderness diminishes many Wilderness values that should be maintained according to the Wilderness Act.

Specific concerns about the High Sierra Camps

The ROD for the Tuolumne River Plan concedes that planners had erred in their calculations about how many pack train trips were necessary to support operations at the Glen Aulin HSC. This error resulted in an overestimate of the positive mitigating impact of altering services at the camp to reduce pack trips. CSERC emphasizes that the Park should work with the concessioner to come up with meaningful and valuable changes to the operation of the High Sierra Camps that would reduce associated stock impacts. In the case of Glen Aulin, the TRP only reduced stock use by 0.7 strings per week (Pp. 20 TRP ROD) which does not come out to a meaningful result for users who might find a very slight reduction in the likelihood they will encounter a pack string. The reduction of stock use as a result of the TRP was only 20%, 3% less than the FEIS stated. Further steps need to be taken to reduce stock use associated with the HSCs, including Glen Aulin.

Should the High Sierra Camps be retained, the temporary water lines and infrastructure associated with Glen Aulin should be removed from the Wilderness. It is unacceptable to allow even a seasonal temporary violation of the Wilderness Act, whether the Park feels it can justify the significance of the impact of the violation or not. It is a known violation of the Wilderness Act. Instead of utilizing a temporary water line when water supplies become limited, amenities like hot showers should no longer be offered and other water saving measures should be implemented that would preclude the need to extend a temporary water line into Wilderness.

Utilization of a helicopter to bring supplies to the HSCs is another clear violation of the Wilderness Act that is allowed in order to provide unnecessary visitor services. Acceptable exceptions include rescue and other emergency needs, not making it more convenient for Park or concessionaire staff to supply visitor services.

CSERC believes that in the Wilderness Plan, the Park should provide an alternative that eliminates some, but not all, of the High Sierra Camps as a meaningful compromise for visitor uses. Rather than CSERC recommending which Camps to remove (over a 5-year phase out period), we believe that Park and concessionaire staff along with the interested public is best positioned to determine which Camps should be removed to best enhance Wilderness values or to bring Park management into true compliance with the purpose of Wilderness.

When considering the historical value of the camps, Park management should also consider the full scope of the history of the High Sierra Camp system - particularly the opening, closing and relocation of camps throughout the 1900s, with the most recent addition of Sunrise HSC in 1961. There has been historical recognition of their impacts that has led to relocation or closure of camps.

Reducing the level of amenities available to visitors at the HSCs is also a management action that should be carefully considered in the Wilderness Plan. Reducing the level of amenities provided in a wilderness environment aligns with Wilderness character, and has the potential to significantly reduce the amount of stock use required to keep the camps open. How much firewood or other supplies does it take to provide hot showers to guests? This is an unnecessary amenity that could be eliminated in order to lessen the need for amenities in some way. Are there generators, or solar panels and batteries that have to be brought in seasonally, or are left behind over the winter? A careful analysis of what can be done to reduce the need for supplies or for pack trains servicing the Camps should be done.

One key issue that CSERC raises is that the High Sierra Camps do not provide visitors with a true Wilderness experience as described in the Wilderness Act, where land is untrammelled by man and visitors experience self-reliance and solitude. Instead, visitors are escorted or carried on horseback through the true Wilderness to a manmade development where they join other strangers to indulge in food they didn't have to carry, cook or clean up after, sleep in beds instead of on the ground, inside of tents they didn't carry or put up instead of under the stars. To allow for this to occur in a small area surrounded by true Wilderness diminishes the experience of Wilderness users. Despite mitigation for visual impacts to scenery, the simple presence of those camps, whether users see signs of them or not, degrades the user experience in the midst of one of America's most treasured Wilderness areas. How can one truly experience solitude and feel they've travelled deep into a Wilderness untrammelled by man, when one knows there is a resort with food, beds and hot showers a few miles away?

While the HSCs may provide a unique experience close to Wilderness, they do so for a disproportionately small number of people compared to the Wilderness users who are negatively impacted by their existence.

Stock Use

For non-stock Wilderness users, impacts from stock use can be particularly disruptive. Trails become dusty and covered in piles of manure that attract clouds of flies (through which, hot, out of breath hikers must pass). Having to yield to pack trains on the trail can also be an undesirable experience. Trail degradation that would not otherwise occur diminishes users' experience, and even the restoration work done to repair such damage can impede upon one's Wilderness visit.

Stock use serves a small segment of Wilderness users but stock use negatively affects the entire suite of Wilderness users.

In addition to affecting other Wilderness users, stock impacts can lead to degradation of many aspects of ones Wilderness experience, such as being untrammelled by man and maintaining a natural condition with ecosystem processes intact.

Impacts from stock use should be minimized. Overall stock use within the wilderness of Yosemite Park should be reduced so as to limit impacts to other Wilderness users as well as to allow for natural ecological processes to gradually recover from so many decades of stock impacts.

Visitor Use and Capacity

Given the high levels of visitor use in the park, trailhead quotas and zone management are insufficient for maintaining the solitude definition of Wilderness. Although Yosemite has so many miles of Wilderness to explore, most visitors tend to visit a select group of destinations, often made popular by social media and guidebooks. The increasing popularity of through hiking trails like the John Muir Trail and Pacific Crest Trail has further concentrated use in certain, limited areas of the Park. Trailhead quotas are essential to minimizing the number of encounters on trails and heavy use of certain trails. Zone capacities can be effective, but only if the zones are created with the most current usage information and take into consideration a balance of use levels within the zone. Creation of high use zones, with destination quotas for destinations within that zone could serve to better protect the Wilderness experience of those wanting to visit a popular destination. Solitude is a key component of Wilderness character and visitor use and capacity limits should focus on providing a quality Wilderness experience instead of focusing on the quantity of Wilderness experiences provided.

Commercial Services

Some level of commercial use is acceptable within Wilderness because it legitimately facilitates visitor experiences and access to public lands for public lands users. However, this use should be minimal and not conflict with other important aspects of Wilderness character.

Guided hikes that offer assistance with logistical aspects of ones visit, but do not provide comfortable amenities are the most acceptable commercial uses. In contrast to guided hikes, the permanent High Sierra Camps allow users to enjoy fantastic mountain scenery without sacrificing a bed and hearty meal at the end of the day (www.yosemitepark.com/high-sierra-camp-guided-trips.aspx). Self-reliance is considered an important aspect of Wilderness character, and having a bed and hearty meal available at your wilderness destination does not align with this concept of self-reliance.

NPS policies as described in the 1989 Wilderness Plan state: the visitor must accept Wilderness largely on its own terms. Modern conveniences are not provided for the comfort of the visitor; and the risks of Wilderness travel, of possible dangers from accidents, from wildlife and natural phenomenon must be accepted as part of the Wilderness experience. (page 12) While High Sierra Camps may not technically be in Wilderness, they are justified as providing a Wilderness experience, a claim that is debatable.

Commercial services should not only be proven to be necessary but the full EXTENT, such as the number of trips a year, should also be proven to be necessary.

Given the abundance of commercial pack services available to access surrounding National Forest Wilderness in the Sierra Nevada, it is increasingly difficult to consider commercial pack trips in Yosemite's Wilderness as an essential service that is not available within a reasonable distance outside the park.

Protecting At-Risk Wildlife and Resources

For decades, wilderness within Yosemite has been managed almost entirely with the goal of managing use to provide a positive wilderness experience for people. A small percentage of that focus has been to minimize (not eliminate) resource impacts in Wilderness that are caused by hikers, backpackers, horseback riders, pack stock, etc. But little focus has aimed to constrain or restrict human activities in areas of Yosemite Park wilderness that are highly critical habitat for rare or threatened wildlife species.

The Sierra Nevada red fox and the wolverine are two furbearers that are so rare in most of their native habitat within Yosemite Park wilderness as to be undetectable through surveys, or in the case of the fox, has only been located in a minute fraction of its historic habitat. Human disturbance of the SNRF is clearly one of the negative impacts to the fox that the Park Service has the ability to actually manage. The Park has no ability to change climate change (which produces drought conditions that allow for coyotes and other competitors or predators to move high into territory most critical for the SNRF). Likewise, climate change and a great reduction of overall depths of snow during the summer season may be critical factors in the apparent decline or extirpation of the wolverine from most or all of Yosemite's wilderness.

It is legally mandated and morally essential that wild species that literally represent wilderness be provided with the greatest possible protection within wilderness. In the case of Yosemite and this Wilderness Plan, CSERC urges that a strong assessment be provided as to the status of the Sierra Nevada red fox, the American marten, the wolverine, the Yosemite toad, the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, and any other at-risk species that have potential to be disturbed in their habitat by wilderness visitors. CSERC also asks that there be mitigation measures developed to ensure that wilderness visitors are clearly excluded from, or at least minimized, in critical habitat areas that are important to the Sierra bighorn sheep as well as the at-risk species already listed above.

In creating a draft management plan for wilderness, the Park Service should evaluate a Resource Protection - Wilderness Enhancement alternative that sets off limits blocks of wilderness within Yosemite for no recreational use. Instead, such areas should be managed for scientific studies, for refugia to enable preservation of rare or threatened wildlife species, and as a comparison area for resources compared to more heavily used wilderness areas that are fully open to recreational visits.

Our Center re-states our strong recommendation that Yosemite Park put itself on the leading edge of wilderness and rare wildlife management by strategically identifying blocks of areas (perhaps blocks as large as 50,000 acres in size) where exclusion of recreational use can best preserve refugia so that these core undisturbed habitat areas can serve as islands of preserved ecosystems that can help to replenish surrounding areas where at-risk species may periodically be diminished or eliminated due to human activities. We ask that Resource Protection Refugia areas be considered by Park biologists for locations that could best serve the goal of preserving the fullest suite of at-risk species.

One aspect of Wilderness management and the effects of humans on resources includes the threat of the spread of the chytrid fungus that is so lethal to

amphibians in high elevation habitat areas. CSERC urges that the Wilderness Plan carefully apply the best available science to assure that areas with known chytrid contamination are made off-limits to recreational use that may spread the fungus to uncontaminated lakes and ponds.

Stock Use and Capacity

Separate from the topic of commercial use, the question of how much stock use to allow is important in the fragile, sensitive conditions of Yosemite wilderness areas. In particular, the upper elevation stringer meadows, riparian areas, and even some larger meadows are vulnerable to the combination of recreational visitor use and stock use. CSERC strongly urges that the proposed preferred alternative limit stock use solely to areas that are evaluated to be healthy and not at risk from stock use. No matter where stock use is allowed, CSERC urges that very strict limits ensure that resources, especially water quality and sensitive plants, be fully protected.

In closing, CSERC encourages Park staff to uphold the values set forth by the Wilderness Act despite pressures from commercial interests and emerging changes in use patterns related to through hiking trails and popular destinations. Will the Wilderness users of tomorrow be able to enjoy the Yosemite Wilderness unimpaired by the use of generations before them?

Thank you for considering these comments,

Correspondence ID: 672 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 17:29:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
It seems as though the park manages the tremendous amount of visitors aswe as they can.

Topic Question 2:

For my livelihood as a mountain guide, the opportunity to access the great terrain of YNP through other ways than the current monopoly concession would allow my clients to experience Yosemite through a climbing lens. My work as a guide includes being a steward for the environments in which I work, and I know that opening guiding up to other people would be a good thing in Yosemite, to lead by example. How that access should come about I'm not sure exactly but having guiding permits accessible through the Certified Guides Cooperative similar to how is used in the Red Rock Natl Conservation area might be a good way. Or having more competition with the current sole concession and allowing other guiding companies access could achieve similar end results for greater access.

Comments: I know guiding in YNP is a very minute piece of the puzzle but for American guides it is very important because it is home to the greatest rock climbing venue in the U.S and arguably the world. Compared to other businesses I'm sure there is plenty of opportunity to allow a larger number of guided climbing trips, and having mote guides out there can offer potential fringe benefits of more capable rescues for the various rescues that YOSAR currently handles. Please heavily consider opening access to more American guides and help foster good stewardship!

Correspondence ID: 673 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the National Park Service's efforts to manage the Yosemite Wilderness as a resource for everyone to enjoy. Efforts such as the lottery camp reservation service, the existence of YOSAR, the handicap accessible trailheads, the bike friendly roads, and maintaining the privilege of climbing in the worlds most astounding rock arena.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness include maintaining a healthy ecosystem within the wilderness and the boundary lands, forest fire prevention, and balancing visitor interests.

Comments: As a member of the American Mountain Guides Association I would like to see the Yosemite Wilderness become more accessible to small guide services and individual guides through the use of Commercial Use Authorizations. It is the goal of the AMGA to promote Professional Licensure through internationally recognized certification in mountain guiding and to promote guiding as a sustainable way of life in the United States. In order to do this we would like to see guides who have achieved certification through the AMGA receive access to the Yosemite Wilderness through an application or lottery process such as the CUA. I believe strongly in the value of Mountain Guides as stewards of the mountains and interpreters of the natural landscape. I hope that the NPS will consider expanding the number guided days, and the number of guide services, allowable in the Yosemite Wilderness.

Correspondence ID: 674 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Minarets pack Station
Ansel Adams Wilderness of the northern Sierra National Forest
& Southern Yosemite National Park
Operated under USFS and NPS permits

January 29, 2016

Warm Greetings,

Everyone is in agreement about the importance of a wilderness plan that preserves our precious Yosemite.

God created this BEAUTY. The beauty of this wilderness is preserved for the public and for all the various species of this wild environment. Who is the public? Is it for All People?

Do hope that you will consider the many people with handicaps that would not get to experience this treasure without the use of stock.

It is an overwhelming task and has a huge impact on so much at so many levels. I pray that the leadership, politics and bureaucracy will make sound (common sense) decisions in this update of the YWP.

It seems a little backwards that comments are being asked but you haven't stated the problems that are current - other than in general. It would be helpful to list what the plans are so we know how to comment on the current issues and offer suggestions.

The loss of trees is of huge magnitude due to climate change and drought, which in my opinion is related to carbon emissions that could be corrected with regenerative organic farming that could sequester carbon in the soil. Education is the best tool for making change.

We at the Minarets Pack Station are committed and dedicated to education and teaching through example the correct way to visit the wilderness. We not only follow the LNT but go above that by always cleaning up after other people.

My greatest concern is to express and urge the importance of our continued stock use in the park as is currently!

We are stewards of the land at home and in the wilderness. We farm organically and are organic grass based dairies have taught us the symbiotic relationship between all organisms on this planet from the microbes in the soil to the air we breathe. Working with holistic systems we also value the sacredness of the environment and the negative impacts people can have. Please do not cut out stock use because of misuse by others.

WE have a long history of experience and are a team to the Park in preserving and protecting our Wilderness. Our family has packed in the back country for 4 generations. Over the years we have seen some misuse by all kinds of people back packing. As the years go by and through education and knowledge we are changing the way people experience the wilderness in a positive long lasting way.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 675 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 17:59:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

When I visit Yosemite's Wilderness Area I aim to experience time in natural setting with minimal exposure to other humans. I also intend to leave the wilderness as I found it, as much as possible. I think most of the current requirements help me and other visitors achieve these goals, provided the regulations are followed. Unfortunately, that is not always the case.

Topic Question 2:

Increased demand for camp sites and greater pressure to allow commercially guided groups. Implementing quotas in popular areas seems to be the only measure available to prevent the wilderness from becoming urban. Commercially guided permits should also be limited. The National Park Service is not mandated to make money for commercial guides and outfitters.

Comments: Thanks for doing your best to keep what little wilderness is left free of human crowds, roads, motorized craft, trash and pets as much as possible. More wildlife, big and small would be welcome.

Correspondence ID: 676 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 18:02:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

NPS has a challenging and delicate job preserving the land and wild spaces reserved as our National Park at Yosemite. It's an extraordinary task to allow recreational opportunities exist along side such a delicate ecosystem. In my opinion, NPS has done a good job with that balance, but I like to think there is also room for improvement. Consideration for the park resources during peak tourism seasons, how to minimize traffic and wildlife during these months, and how best to allow park access to the many people who may travel from very far away, and only get the chance to enjoy the splendor of Yosemite once. For these reasons, bike rentals, raft rentals and campsites all make Yosemite a destination that can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of income or financial resources. NPS has done a good job in attempting to create access for those who are not savvy wilderness experts by allowing shuttles and tour buses to guide these individuals around the valley floor.

Topic Question 2:

To me, both recreational access and protection of the ecosystem are at the top of the list of importance. The system of high Sierra camps allows an unprecedented opportunity for exploration of the high Sierra and caters to the most savvy of hikers and mountaineers. The potential for staging a few to many day wilderness excursion is an achievable reality because of the access and system of camps. It's an extraordinary part of the park, and one that allows the more seasoned wilderness experts a chance at enjoying Yosemite without the crowding and general sense of concentration of people occurring on the valley floor. It's important to balance recreational opportunities for first time visitors with a system that allows access to the old-timers that know the park well, and are well versed in "leave no trace" principles.

Another issue entirely is livestock on the trails. I assume this is a hot topic, and know the many arguments, especially of the environmental impact. I think it's important to remember that not long ago in our history, this was the only means of transportation! There is a historical value to the mule trains, and the way of life that is represented by this practice. It's clearly an ongoing issue to maintain and preserve livestock usage trails, but also to inform visitors and the public about the many services provided by this practice. It's an amazing opportunity to be able to see the park as John Muir would have!

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 677 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 18:04:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the way the National Park Service has attempted to limit the number of visitors in Yosemite National Park to protect the unique Wilderness Areas & Nature of the Yosemite National Park. But I think the increased impact on the Park from overcrowding is not being addressed in any unique or creative ways. Both on the public and commercial guiding side of wilderness management operations.

Topic Question 2:

I believe that the most important issue is overcrowding in the more popular sections of Yosemite National Park. Most of the wilderness areas in Yosemite National Park are underutilized. Additional qualified commercial guide services with a long history of guiding in the Sierra Nevada could help both direct visitors to other parts of Yosemite while providing a valuable educational opportunity to explore and steward the other areas of the Yosemite wilderness area aside from the most common and overused areas of the park. This opportunity for distribution of visitors has been limited by Yosemite Current Management Plan by limiting technical climbing and alpine mountaineering in other areas of Yosemite National Park.

Comments: With that in mind I would like to offer the following thoughts with regards to how technical alpine guiding in both winter and summer is administered within the park's wilderness areas and how additional commercial opportunities can help alleviate overcrowding in the Yosemite National Park.

- 1: I strongly encourage Yosemite National Park to expand commercial guiding in the areas of technical rock and alpine environments in both the winter and summer seasons. It is my belief that accomplished guide services and guides can provide a well-rounded wilderness experience and utilize other parts of the Yosemite Wilderness to enjoy and experience that both minimizes impact increases safety.
- 2: Commercial guiding operations should be opened up to encourage a greater variety of terrain options to guests. Under the current system it hard for visitors to the park to find a variety of the options of technical rock, ski, and alpine recreation or to experience other areas of the Yosemite National Park Wilderness then the most impacted area. These opportunities have not been explored or experienced due to the restrictive nature of current commercial permits in Yosemite National Park. i.e. only backpacking, backcountry skiing, and horse packing commercial permits have been available. No third, fourth or fifth class alpine terrain is commercially available.
3. Yosemite National Park should extent permits to companies who specialize in guiding guests with disabilities. The current plan makes it difficult to find a guide who specializes in guiding persons with disabilities in technical terrain. I believe by expanding the permit system Yosemite could do a better job of creating reasonable accommodation as outlined in the ADA for climbers who have hearing, sight as well as other disabilities and find it difficult to find guide services to accommodate their activities.
4. Since Yosemite National Park is an international destination there is a need for rock, alpine, and ski guide services that can serve multiple cultures and languages. I believe that there should be at least some commercial guiding operations who can safely and respectfully guide guests in other languages. Through these means foreign guests can have a positive safe experience while learning and learn about protecting wilderness which is unique to the United States.
5. Guiding certification & education is available from several sources should only be one part of the requirement for technical guiding in alpine, rock and snow in Yosemite's wilderness backcountry. In order to protect the unique Wilderness Areas of Yosemite National Park, the NPS should look for long standing financial stable companies who long standing safety records, expansive guiding experience in the Sierra Nevada as well as the history, geology and unique aspects of the range itself. Plus a proven operational relationship in both the National Park Service and National Forest Services managing Wilderness Areas. A technical certification does not vouch for ethics, responsibility and good stewardship of the land.

Finally, I would like to Thank the Yosemite Management Team for allowing me to voice my opinions on the updating of the Management Plan for Yosemite National Park mainly in regards to commercial operations. Please keep me informed of all future meetings and requests for comments as well as any opportunities to work with the Yosemite National Park in furthering your goals of a well managed Wilderness Area for future generations to come. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 678 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 18:20:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value that the park preserves 748,036 acres, 95% o 704,624 acres designated as wilderness. I value that the park has historically provided the rare European style hut to hut hiking opportunities in the High Sierra camps to wilderness lovers in the US who may not have the means or skills to camp on their own in the designated wilderness areas. I value that this opportunity that has existed for decades has become a cultural institution in the park which I am lucky to have experienced. I value the opportunity to provide public comment to the Park Service as a member of a relatively very small number of visitors who has experienced the Yosemite Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

Trailhead quotas and trail management are areas of concern relative to the Yosemite Wilderness, but, in the areas most impacted, you are still talking about a tiny fraction of the designated wilderness. It is not overrun or dominated by man. Drastic measures like reducing the High Sierra camps' capacity by a couple of beds per night won't help. Imposing further limitations on camp capacity, trail quotas and stock use could have some dire unintended consequences. If you push people out of the camps, they'll tend to overuse nearby Wilderness even more in order to be close tio the camps if they don't have a good comfort level. If fewer and fewer future stewards of the Wilderness have no means to become exposed to it in a comfortable environment, people won't act to protect what they don't love. Alternatives like re-habilitating little used trails should be explored to give people the options to hike and

camp away from the camp loop for solitude.

I personally do not believe the current levels of commercial services or stock use are concerning. We are talking about a vast area and the stock and commercial use is confined to a very tiny portion of that area.

Comments: Mission

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

I've quoted the NPS Mission because I believe in the relevance of it when considering the Yosemite Wilderness Management. With 95% of the park dedicated as Wilderness, the visitors to those areas are still in a huge minority. Visitors to the High Sierra camps are treated to what has become a cultural tradition in the Wilderness. Reducing beds at the camps and the number of participants in ranger guided or self guided hikes have the opposite effect of preserving cultural resources, which I consider the camps to be. If fewer and fewer people can experience the majesty of the Wilderness, then interest in experiencing it will dwindle. Future generations may not support preservation at all.

The High Sierra Camps themselves have become a cultural institution. Again, I point to the mission statement goal of extending the benefits of a cultural resource. Any further reduction in capacity is counter to the parks mission. It is not as if the already small camp size is dominating the landscape. The camps are gorgeous in and of themselves and the people that work in the camps are treasures. They are so passionate about Yosemite and it's traditions. It is impossible to leave the camps without wanting to preserve the current access levels and encourage others to visit.

In closing, I really want to add that I firmly believe that the designated wilderness that already exists in Yosemite in a pristine state is so vast that any measures to reduce use of the High Sierra Camps, the Loop trail and the two long distance trails in the vicinity of the camps is overkill. Having visited last summer on both a guided hike and independent hike, I found myself alone more often than not. No changes need to be made at this time.

Correspondence ID:	679	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan,29,2016 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Web Form				

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Being able to bring groups of children into the Yosemite wilderness for backpacking trips, 12 children plus 3 staff at a time. The trails are well graded and well-marked.

Topic Question 2:

Increasing access to match increased demand while retaining the ecological integrity and wilderness character of the land. With the growing California population, the old trailhead quotas and limited number of campsites available are too restrictive and serve as a barrier to access.

Comments: Dear Superintendent,

As the Camp Director of Camp Tawonga, a non-profit organization that holds a Commercial Use Authorization to lead hikes and backpacking trips in Yosemite National Park, I am submitting this comment as part of the public scoping phase of the update to the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

Camp Tawonga's Use of Yosemite

Camp Tawonga brings approximately 1100 children into Yosemite each year. A core part of our mission as a non-profit is to foster children's appreciation of the natural world. We call this part of our mission Tikkun Olam: a partnership with nature. Tikkun Olam is a Hebrew phrase that means to heal, transform, or repair the world. Our trips into the Yosemite wilderness allow children to experience the majesty of nature and build their self-reliance and cooperative skills as a group, while learning about ecology, natural history, and wilderness ethics. We want children to fall in love with nature, so that they can return home inspired and empowered to protect nature as citizens, consumers, voters and activists.

For the past eight years, I have served as the director of our wilderness programs. I am a Leave No Trace Master Educator and teach every Tawonga guide how to follow the principles of Leave No Trace. We teach the principles of Leave No Trace to every child on every trip and practice these ethics daily. As such, our trips protect the environment above and beyond the requirements of the wilderness permit - for example, whereas the permit requires us to camp 100 ft from water, our trips strive to camp 200 ft from water. As another example, the wilderness permit permits campfires in the backcountry below 9600', however Tawonga trips prohibit campfires altogether in order to minimize our impact on the wilderness environment.

Designation of our Activities as Educational Rather than Commercial

Prior to 2014, Tawonga held a Special Use Permit to operate in the park rather than a Commercial Use Authorization. I request that NPS re-evaluate how it defines commercial services, and that the activities that Tawonga is engaged in not be considered commercial. Our use is analogous to that of educational institutions-which are not considered "commercial services" by NPS. Our goals, like the trips by educational institutions, are to provide environmental education and foster self-reliance and teamwork.

When we obtain permits to summit half-dome using the commercial.recreation.gov portal, our use is designated as educational, so there is a precedent for viewing our use in this way.

I recently spent a week in Yosemite learning more about its natural history through the California Naturalist certification training so that I could better train our guides to deepen the educational components of the trips that they lead.

Allowing our Longstanding Use of the Park to Continue

If Camp Tawonga's use is still deemed commercial, our use should still be allowed, as our trips meet the purposes of the Wilderness Act in that they assist campers in "realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the area," including specifically the recreational, scenic, and educational uses.

Trailhead Quotas and Access

Children are an important user group who have special needs. Children would not be able to access the backcountry safely without trained guides or other responsible adults. Tawonga provides an important service by bringing children into the backcountry. Most of our campers have never gone backpacking with their families and Tawonga is the only time that they access the Yosemite wilderness.

In order for them to be able to access the backcountry, it is vital to have a sufficient number of trails that are low or medium difficulty that can accommodate groups. The low trailhead quota from the Pohono Trail to Taft point precludes us from taking campers there even though it would be a suitable destination in terms of distance and terrain difficulty. Fifteen years ago, Tawonga regularly sent trips to Sunrise Lakes and Lyell Canyon, however due to the increased popularity of these trails and low trailhead quotas relative to demand, we are seldom ever able to bring our groups to these destinations even using the reservation system. I urge you to increase the trailhead quotas to better match the increased demand so that access is not so severely restricted.

I also urge you to consider the trail to the top of Mt. Hoffman as an established trail rather than off-trail. Because the group size for off-trail travel is limited to 8 people maximum, we do not take our groups up Mt. Hoffman. However this trail is so well established that this designation is no longer appropriate. We would like to be able to take our groups on this trail. The same can be said for Polydome Lakes. We avoid camping at Polydome because there is a very small section of cross-country travel required from the Murphy Creek trail to reach the campsite at Polydome. We would like to be able to take our groups here, however due to the restriction of 8 people max for off-trail travel we do not have access to these lakes which would be a suitable destination for young hikers.

In the new plan, I would like to see NPS clarify how it applies the various types of quotas. The scoping materials referenced the following types of quotas: Trailhead, Pass- through, Exit, and Destination. It is unclear currently how the quotas, other than Trailhead quotas, operate.

Tawonga used to be able to access all of our desired destinations in Yosemite by acquiring First-Come, First-Served permits one day in advance of the trips. However in recent years we have seen so much increased demand that it has become necessary, as well as expensive, to secure permits in advance through the reservation system. In some cases, we have entered the lottery only to be denied our 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th choice destinations. The remaining options were inappropriately difficult for young backpackers. It is vital that the quota system keeps up with growing demand while also preserving the unique character of the wilderness so that access is not unnecessarily restricted.

As a lover of wilderness, I want to see Yosemite, the most precious gem of the National Park System, be protected for generations to come. I hope that the NPS will consider how to balance preserving the wilderness quality of the land with maintaining access for users.

Thank you for your consideration.
Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 680 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Protecting and educating the public about our natural resources. Providing an organized camping, and permitting structure so that the public may enjoy their lands without destroying it.

Topic Question 2:

Noise and air pollution due to too many cars. I think the lower Park should be like Zermatt where people park outside the park and shuttle in for their stay. And all the park vehicles are electric including the buses. Through traffic would be allowed but only as through traffic.

Comments: I also think that AMGA certified rock and alpine guides should be allowed to operate in the park with a proof of certification and liability insurance.

The general public needs more opportunity to access their land with a professional guide who has a vested interest in teaching and preserving the land. Since the rock guiding office has been closed in Tuolumne meadows there are fewer opportunities for the general public to safely access their land with a professional guide. Often the valley is too hot in summer and now finding a guide in Tuolumne is much harder, it would be great if the park allowed certified guides to operate in the high country.

Correspondence ID: 681 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the time-honored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long-established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently-adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Topic Question 2:

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely-accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock-related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer-reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a long-range (10- to 15-year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified non-profit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained.

Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a park-wide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Comments: I was born and raised in the West, and have had and used horses and mules for the majority of my life, and made a living using them for part of my life. I believe that it is important to maintain Western tradition and practice of using and packing horses and mules in a responsible manner, including using them on public lands. Being able to ride and pack into National Parks such as Yosemite, is indeed a pleasure, and argueably a right as an American citizen.

Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 682 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.29,2016 19:48:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the focus on preservation and education of visitors on the importance of environmental awareness and preservation

Topic Question 2:

How the park will continue to appropriately manage all visitors while upholding values of the National Park Service.

Comments: I'm writing in regards to Wilderness Stewardship Plan, and the potential to open commercial guiding in areas of the park. In the following I hope to voice a perspective that gives voice to the opportunities commercial guiding could offer all Yosemite Visitors.

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. By allowing more Commercial Use Authorizations, a greater number of park visitors could have opportunity for education in terms of park stewardship, as well as safety and resource management.

By allowing the highest level of trained mountain guide organizations to work in the park, the park could continue to build on its formal education of public purpose, via the training all qualified mountain guides undergo.

Thank you for you time,

Correspondence ID: 683 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.29,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the focus on preservation and education of visitors on the importance of environmental awareness and preservation.

Topic Question 2:

How the park will continue to appropriately manage all visitors while upholding values of the National Park Service.

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hope to voice a perspective that gives voice to the opportunities commercial guiding could offer all Yosemite Visitors.

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide. By allowing more Commercial Use Authorizations, a greater number of park visitors could have opportunity for education in terms of park stewardship, as well as safety and resource management.

By allowing the highest level of trained mountain guide organizations to work in the park, the park could continue to build on its formal education of public purpose, via the training all qualified mountain guides undergo.

Thank you for you time,

Correspondence ID: 684 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

We value the care and efficiency that the National Park Service currently puts into protecting all life in Yosemite, from the smallest flowers in our fragile meadows to the roots of the Giant Sequoias and the return of the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue facing Yosemite and the National Park Service today is how to balance an increasing number of visitors with Yosemite's fragile wilderness. The goal is to allow visitors to enjoy all of Yosemite's wild and scenic treasures without them destroying the local ecosystems and negatively impacting Yosemite's wilderness. We would like the National Park Service to see that CUA permit holders can be the liaisons between them and uninformed, unguided adventurers that don't understand the devastation that can come for just a few misplaced footprints.

Comments: At Yosemite Family Adventures, our whole livelihood is dependent on Yosemite's wilderness and we are excited that this review will eventually aid in the preservation and protection of such an important part of this magnificent National Park. It's our hope that the National Park Service notices that many CUA permit holders care about Yosemite's well being and that many CUA permit holders would jump at the chance to work side by side with the Park Service to help protect Yosemite's wilderness!

We feel that the National Park Service can use "willing" CUA permit holders as a liaison between the outnumbered National Park Service officers and the 4 million Yosemite visitors.

We would love the opportunity for an "expanded role" under the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan, whether CUA permit holders get access to extra training and classes so they can report hotspots for misuse, and/or the chance to take more training or classes that allow for more "wilderness authority" so they can give warnings to visitors for infractions, even if it's just a patch on their backpacks that show some sort of "Yosemite wilderness protection authority" and a note pad with "warning tickets".

One of our fears is that the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan could be used to limit the amount of guided trips into Yosemite because of a fear that to many visitors will harm the wilderness; when an alternative would be to try and expand the amount of guided, informed trips into Yosemite's serene wilderness so that the National Park Service can rest assured that at least a handful of the 4 million visitors have a Yosemite Wilderness Liaison to teach them how to respect Yosemite's fragile wilderness.

We want the National Park Service to know that Yosemite Family Adventures and many other CUA permit holders are on their side and we are glad to do whatever is necessary to protect Yosemite's magnificent wilderness for future generations.

Correspondence ID: 685 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 20:24:15
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

1. Wilderness is accessible to people of different physical capabilities due to the different modes to access and stay in the wilderness.
2. Restoring the wilderness by moving trails out of sensitive areas, removing campsites and use trails that are in poor locations

Topic Question 2:

the stress of increased use and more people in the Wilderness
educating wilderness users on proper behavior and enforcing this when needed, in the wilderness - leave no trace, pack out all trash, proper campsite selection

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 686 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 20:26:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: A personal goal of mine is to climb in Yosemite. As an amateur rock climber, I will need the skills and guidance of a professional rock guide to make that goal a reality. The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA (AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide (certified in rock, alpine, and ski mountaineering).

I believe that my enjoyment of the national park in a climbing carpal you as well as my safety are dependent on a plan that includes adequate opportunities for credential rock guides to lead clients through Yosemite.

Correspondence ID: 687 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value it's approach to providing access to individuals so that they can experience natural wonders, wilderness and recreation to individuals of all experiences and demographics.

Topic Question 2:

The most important issue facing Yosemite Wilderness is providing different ways for individuals to find appropriate and safe access to the Wilderness, including resources such as guided access.

Comments: I feel it is important for the NPS to consider guided climbing and mountaineering access for all individuals, especially since it is an underutilized way to get people safely into areas where they may create a negative impact on their own.

Trained certified guides are professionals who are approached regularly by individuals to guide them in Yosemite National Park. These requests are often times the only avenue to climbing in the park that the individual knows. Without providing guided access, the individual either can not access YNP in a way they would like to (safely and professionally), or they are forced to figure out climbing in YNP on their own, usually with negative safety and environmental impacts on the park.

By providing more guided access, Yosemite National Park can:

- Increase education and stewardship of the land
- provide better standards and monitoring of climbers (via regulated and certified guides)
- Make sure that individuals climb in YNP in a safe manner that creates the lowest impact to the land through low ratio CUA's.

It is important when providing guided climbing access, that training/credentials are a paramount consideration. Without certified guides, YNP would not ensure a safe standard that visitors and managers can trust, and the land, visitors, and nearby visitors would be greatly impacted in a negative way.

I think it is also important to consider individual guides (not just guide companies or guide concessions). Many individual guides are highly trained, certified, professionals who, through a CUA available to sole proprietors can greatly enhance the experience of YNP.

Thank you for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 688 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 20:57:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I value the dedication to preserving and conserving the wildlife, flora, trail systems, and water that surrounds Yosemite National Park. I believe that it is critical for the Park Service to keep protecting what makes Yosemite such a special place on this planet, its natural beauty. The amount of people on trails at one time is a big player on the negative effects of being such a popular park.

Topic Question 2:

I believe the most important issues are the amount of people visiting the park, the permitting system for back country trips, and continuation of commercial guiding in the park. I think that these three subjects all have things in common regarding the amount of people wanting to experience the wilderness of Yosemite, the impact that has on the wilderness, and the ability for people with less knowledge of the outdoors to experience in a safe way that educates them on safety, stewardship, and flora/fauna. More education through ranger programs, commercial guiding outfitters and events in Yosemite such as Leave No Trace would benefit the problem sheer numbers of hikers that may not know how to lessen their impact on the wilderness.

Comments: I will be brief here but these are the topics I feel the most strongly about.

1. There is a strong need for commercial use of the wilderness in and out of Yosemite National Park. Commercial guiding outfitters allow for people with less experience in the outdoors to go past their limits and see, touch, smell the wilderness that makes Yosemite a special place. They also serve as an educational tool to help teach Leave No Trace principles and safety in the back country.
2. More commercial wilderness permit quotas to allow the more of the public to experience the back country that require guided services.
3. The Half Dome permit system is extremely difficult for the average user as I have heard many of my clients complain about it. Maybe allowance for climbing with any back country wilderness permit and leaving the day-use lottery in place.
4. I believe that Rock Climbing Guiding should be open to other outfitters due to the sheer number of the public that wishes to go climbing in Yosemite but might not be able to due to over booking of guides.
6. For stock use I believe it is important to find ways to reduce the amount of hiker/rider conflicts that have surfaced such as mule/horse manure on the trails and limit camping away from stock camps. Maybe creating stock only campsites away from hiker campsites could help the problem.
7. Traffic has always been a huge issue in the park and I wish I had helpful input but that is not my specialty. Please find a way to reduce the amount of cars in the park!!!! This in turn can reduce the amount of accidents with other vehicles and animals!

Thank you for all of your hard work!!!

Correspondence ID: 689 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 20:58:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have never been but as a climber look forward to visiting and the way in which climbers can enjoy the park is crucial.

Topic Question 2:

As someone who frequently utilizes AMGA certified guides it is important for me that all certified guides get access to guide in the park. AMGA guides teach stewardship and promote safety. Being able to climb with a guide of my choice and not having only a select few guiding companies is important.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 690 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Privet recreational opportunities.

Topic Question 2:

The current system does not provide sufficiently diverse opportunities for visitors who would choose to access Yosemite wilderness with a guide.

Additional rock climbing and mountaineering guiding opportunities should be made available in the form of limited, low-ratio Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) that are reasonable for sole proprietors and small businesses to obtain.

Comments: Modern professional mountain guiding helps realize the formal educational public purpose of wilderness.

As rock climbing and mountaineering are not at capacity in Yosemite wilderness, the plan's analysis of commercial services should reflect that, and should provide for additional diverse opportunities for the guided public.

Modern, trained guides are invested, professional stewards of the land and the wilderness resource.

The highest professional terrain-specific credentials should be considered as selection criteria for obtaining a CUA. These provide the highest quantifiable assessment of guide quality and skill, and serve to enhance visitor safety, resource stewardship, and reduction of social impacts. Those credentials are the AMGA Rock Guide, the AMGA Alpine Guide, and the IFMGA Mountain Guide.

Correspondence ID: 691 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 21:17:46

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Accessible land that draws you in. Locals, US travelers, international travelers alike, this land is a right to visit and should be a right for visitors to explore with the help of professional guides

Topic Question 2:

Carbon footprints. The amount of visitors to the park have a large impact on how the land is used and abused. The more visitors that the park sees, with less education on how humans impact the environment has a dramatic impact on the land in the park as well as the xou try and area surrounding the park.

Comments: The increased amount of visitors the Yosemite have had a significant impact of the land, water and air surrounding the park. I believe that educated and skilled naturalists, guides and inhabitants, local and far who can spread the word of how we need to respect the land will serve this land better in its future. Guides, especially highly educated guides can have a significant impact of how we can control visitors and how the land is treated will have a great impact on the park. Guiding is not a singular teaching of how to climb. Guiding is about educating people who may not be exposed to stewards who have a knowledge of the land, how to treat it and how to explore it in a safe and efficient manner. Guiding in a National Park like Yosemite is not only an opportunity for hard working and highly educated guides I North America who are trying to make a living but reach a large group of untapped resources (visitors who want to hire a guide!) YNP should be future thinking and lead the charge. Charge Large guide services who want to use the area..day fees, permits...possibilities are endless on how the park service could not only get cleaner, more concise recognition but save money o. Rescues with having highly trained guides operating on the public lands. Please consider opening you Park to a AMGA guide service.

Correspondence ID: 692 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 21:20:07

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

First Yosemite offers the opportunity for children , people with disabilities and tourist to experience yosemite through the amenities in the valley., For us that are able to access the wild areas of Yosemite we have those opportunities as well but cn be overcrowded by the revenue drawn by the valley concessions.

Topic Question 2:

Accessibility, Camping must be reserved within a minute of on line eligibility.Tioga pass should be a bigger priority to be kept open longer and opened earlier to provide access to the eastern Sierra. Also, to state the obvious, the dam at Hetch Hecht must be removed and that valley should remain a wilderness zone accessible only by foot.

Comments: I think a new management program for rock Climbing guides should be started. Having a main concessioner for the valley makes sense but creating opportunities for other companies and trips should be expanded so people have the opportunity to experience more of the wilderness in a Environmentally responsible manner

Correspondence ID: 693 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 21:37:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
Yosemite attracts a huge number of visitors each year. These visitors get to see some truly unique landscape that includes incredible geological, anthropological, and natural histories.

Topic Question 2:

It is important that Yosemite's wilderness continues to be protected and accessible. Currently the access comes in the form of trails (with a quota system), the use of stock, wilderness camps, and guide services (only one for technical terrain).

I believe that there needs to be a balance of access and protection that should swing toward less pack stock, and fewer semi-permanent wilderness camps. I also feel that there is an important role for guides and guide services. See comments below.

Comments: Guides and guide services provide an important educational and access component to the wilderness stewardship plan. The access they provide is safer, more diverse, and will lessen negative social interactions through proficiency and cooperation.

Guides provide a service to visitors unable to reach areas of wilderness as well as visitors looking for a challenge associated with the terrain within the wilderness.

Guides provide the education to both move efficiently through terrain as well as acceptable practices for use of the terrain. Guides are invested in the stewardship of the wilderness and will pass that level of investment on to their guests and to all other users they interact with.

There are many opportunities for increased guiding within Yosemite. The current system is lacking in diversity of services for the visitor. The areas for increased guiding should encompass all parts of Yosemite, including rock and mountaineering opportunities.

By opening up the permit system for any guide company or sole proprietor to obtain user days the quality and quantity of guided parties will increase. This should be done in a way that enables yearly acquisition of a permit, such as low-ratio commercial use authorizations (CUAs).

To ensure the quality of the services there should be a standard for the guides using Yosemite's wilderness. The American Mountain Guides Association provides that standard. The terrain in which guides are using should reflect the level of training and certification that the guide has received.

Correspondence ID: 694 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 21:49:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
I think you have a lot of intelligent, thoughtful personnel trying to do the right thing.

Topic Question 2:

Please don't poison the waters that have fish in them. Thank you. Roger

Comments: Please cut the waste in the parks operation. Cut costs when possible.

Correspondence ID: 695 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 21:50:44
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
The traditional sense of wilderness (from wilderness act) doesn't apply to a lot of areas in the park that are technically within the "wilderness" boundary. This is appropriate for the volume of visitors that visit YNP and the physical/terrain/how infrastructure was developed to showcase the park's beauty. However, it is necessary to adjust for how the different zones are managed, designated and defined.

Topic Question 2:

1) It is necessary to adjust for how different zones are managed. Zones that are clearly not "wilderness" should be re-designated if the NPS wants to uphold the definition of wilderness set forth in the wilderness act in true wilderness areas.

2) The public's lack of option (one concession) for hiring a climbing guide of their choice to access and experience climbing in YNP's wilderness. The public should be able to hire a Certified Guide of their choice with the appropriate training level for the terrain.

Comments: Please open the park for the public to be able to hire an AMGA Certified Rock Guide, Alpine Guide or IFMGA Guide of their choice. Certified Guides understand the importance of wilderness and are active stewards of the lands. Guides model LNT and educate their guests about the meaning and definition of wilderness all while helping to facilitate an exceptional experience within the wilderness itself.

Correspondence ID: 696 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:
One of the greatest things about the United States is our wilderness ethic and a desire to preserve the natural beauty of our country. The Wilderness Act and the National Park Management Act provide for the preservation of the resource, but also allow for viewing and recreating in the Wilderness. Often times

the interpretation of these acts limits use in specific sensitive areas or controls the amount of commercial use in the Park. In most cases this is beneficial, but at some cases can seem over-restrictive by authorizing only one entity to operate. If done correctly the opportunity for other businesses to operate in the Park would give the chance for more park visitors to learn about the Wilderness Act and become better stewards to the park through guided access.

Topic Question 2:

Yosemite is clearly a very popular park. Many people visit the park and stay in their vehicles or close by the structures present in the park. Others hike or climb the perfect granite walls of the valley. Some may feel there is crowding, which is certainly the case on the more popular trails and climbs. Other areas are less used and could accommodate more visitors. The park is in a difficult position because there are many people who wish to visit the park. The use is concentrated in a relatively small area outside the Wilderness and a few specific areas/trails inside the Wilderness. This leaves an incredible amount of wilderness area that is relatively unused when compared to the heavy impacts in a few specific locations. Use could be spread out into shoulder seasons or in the middle of the week when there are less visitors to the park and to less used areas.

Comments: My interest in this comment process directly due to the potential for guided access to Yosemite National Park outside the concession system currently in place. I am an American Mountain Guides Association(AMGA) Certified Rock, Alpine and Ski Guide. These certifications are internationally recognized by the International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations(IFMGA). The AMGA is a member of the IFMGA making me an American IFMGA Mountain Guide. I specialize in providing custom, small group and private experiences to my clients. I have guided clients all over the world including in the National Parks through working for Concessions and through Commercial Use Authorizations(CUA) held by other businesses. For me these relationships are key to be able to access certain areas, but there are many ways in which they are unsustainable. Yosemite is one area where there has been no way for me to bring my clients through the current Concessionaire. I hope this can change to allow me to access Yosemite with my clients through a CUA program.

There are many examples of where the CUA has been implemented to good effect. North Cascades National Park allows generous CUAs and limits use through overnight permits in high use areas. Denali has a program for guided climbing and skiing outside of Denali(peak) Hunter and Foraker. Mount Rainier fairly recently opened up its concession program to include three concessions from one and added a CUA program. The Rainier CUA is limited to 5 days, but is capped in terms of the number issued. Just in the past year Rocky Mountain National Park opened up its concession from one to six! Alongside this increase are 3 day CUAs which are readily available.

It is great to see the National Parks considering and implementing increased commercial access. With this increase comes added responsibility for the guides to be good stewards and educators. To me this goes without saying. Many other guides who are responding right now will tell you about the training and qualifications they have. Stewardship, qualifications and excellence are things every guide should include in their application for access if the process that has happened in other parks goes forward in Yosemite. The piece of the puzzle I would like to highlight is diversity of the opportunity that should be presented should the park decide to offer more access.

As an example: The Rocky Mountain and Rainier CUAs can benefit me as a visiting guide. I can plan a trip with my clients well in advance and sell them that experience. However these programs are of limited benefit to guides who live in that area. Qualified and motivated individuals and businesses who are located in Colorado and Washington can certainly take advantage of the CUAs that currently exist there, but it is expensive to apply for them for a limited number of days. What I respectfully recommend is a tiered structure where larger local businesses can hold a larger block of use under a CUA, local individual guides can hold a CUA for a medium range of days say 20-30 days and visiting guides can come for 5-7 days.

After seeing the process and result in other parks and being enthusiastic about the opportunity I, and others were ultimately disappointed with the outcome. A recent positive experience I've had is working with a local non-profit land manager in my area. The Mohonk Preserve outside New Paltz, NY has a number of very valuable programs in place. First they require all guides to be trained for the terrain where they guide. The AMGA is one such training program that is allowed there. Second they have a tiered structure where small to medium sized businesses have access alongside individual guides. Both of these groups have unlimited access, but there are a limited number of slots available. The Preserve then offers 10 days to visiting guides who wish to bring their clients and work legally on the land. I feel having this tiered structure has provided for the best balance between use and preservation of the resource. Though this is a private entity the model could be used by the park to enhance the experience of its visitors while maintaining the stewardship and conservation goals the park was founded on.

Through my writing it may seem like I have presented the opening of access to more commercial operators as a foregone conclusion. That is far from the case. I think the park should consider the options carefully. Ultimately I believe strongly guides can be connectors and educators in the National Parks and on other public lands. In addition, training and certification by an internationally recognized organization can provide the public with the best experience from an enjoyment and risk management perspective. I hope Yosemite will choose to allow guides like me and other businesses the opportunity to connect our clients with the natural resources while preserving them for others while being mindful of the experiences of neighboring parks.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 697 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 23:08:12
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I am writing addressing the current commercial guiding operations in Yosemite. I want to give my voice as a guide working for the concession the Yosemite Mountaineering School for seven years. I am an AMGA certified Rock Guide. There is a large voice coming from the AMGA from an outsiders perspective who wants in. They wrote me telling me I should say climbing is not at capacity in Yosemite and for that more guides should be allowed. From my perspective as one of the 12 full time guides in the park the terrain we guide on is very crowded already. There is limited climbs of lower levels in Yosemite and because of this it is very popular. I don't think YMS interferes too much with the general public because on longer routes we try to start routes at first light before other climbers reach the routes. For beginner single pitch routes we do dominate the Swan Slab area at times but there are other areas with good easy climbs but not good for bringing large groups to teach. Some routes truly are at capacity like Snake Dike because no matter how early one starts it is crowded. From my perspective as a guide in Yosemite the concession is meeting people's needs for guiding and more guides on the moderate routes 5.8 and under in the Valley would be a loss for the general public.

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 698 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 23:17:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: These comments are extremely brief, and do not do the subject justice. Please do not mistake the brevity for a lack of interest.

Following are some subject areas which I feel need to be addressed in this planning process.

- (1) How does access via the road transportation system impact Wilderness beyond the road end? (It is difficult to plan for Wilderness without taking into account how people arrive at the Wilderness entry point.)
- (2) Requiring permits for day-hiking everywhere, all the time. I am not advocating this, but others have done so. Other agencies have tried this, and run into problems. There was great public resistance. Do not repeat the mistakes of other agencies.
- (3) Trailhead quotas. There is seemingly a never-ending tendency to continually tighten the screws. The urge to protect the land by keeping people out is always present, and should be resisted. You don't protect an area by driving its proponents away.
- (4) Related to quotas is the administrative process for the visitor to obtain a permit. The present system is needlessly burdensome on the visitor, and the emphasis is on "needlessly."
- (5) In a previous planning process I suggested that the political ramifications of decisions needs to be taken into account, and I was rudely brushed aside with the remark that it is not your responsibility to be concerned about political fallout. I take exception to the idea that you do not need to be concerned about whether visitors find the plan to be acceptable.
- (6) High Sierra Camps: Retain? Remove? Reduce capacity? Modify operation? Some of the camps, or all of them?
- (7) Impact of stock use. When does a helicopter have less impact than stock?

Correspondence ID: 699 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 23:30:41
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

I have been backpacking in the Yosemite wilderness since I was just a few months old, initially with my parents, then later as a teenager with friends. I have taken my children backpacking since they were little and they now say they value what they learned and that they will continue with their children in the future. I've cherished the beauty, serenity, and education opportunities of the wilderness with a wide range of options from the high sierra camps with interpretive ranger programs and some comfort that I can share the wilderness with children and elderly. At the other end, I have always enjoyed distant backpacks including occasional off trail adventures where I can go for days without seeing other people. The Yosemite wilderness is so vast and diverse that it accommodates that full spectrum. The High Sierra Camps are an important part of Yosemite's history and have always been a vital part of getting people deeper into the wilderness. They provide refueling/water stations for long distance backpackers. Most important they provide a place of education and inspiration to learn more and explore on our own. The camps are the only way my aging parents can now get into the back country and the only way I know a lot of children or inexperienced people first began their trips into the wilderness which has led to a lifetime of true wilderness backpacking and environmental stewardship everywhere they go and live.

Topic Question 2:

- 1) High Sierra Camps, situated in the wilderness are important part of Yosemite from past to present and future. The camps provide a few tiny places among vast wilderness to help the young, elderly, inexperienced and most important, those who wish to learn a great deal about Yosemite without the chaotic crowds of the front country and relatively shallow ranger programs with far less influence on its audience members. There is nothing really like the High Sierra Camp circuit in other national parks. Granted, they should be managed better to include more efficient supplies and healthier options including more organic produce, less waste WITHOUT reducing the numbers of visitors. Visitors could carry their own tea/coffee/water cups, utensils, lunch bags etc. But overall, the Yosemite wilderness is so vast that for people who choose to do so, its easy to hike for days with minimal impact from other people. So, why limit some of the most influential and positive opportunities for the park service to teach the public and share so much on a deeper level than anywhere else in the park? I believe the camps reach people who are most influential.
- 2) Threats from distant origins: I see and hear evidence of issues affecting Yosemite's wilderness from climate change, ozone air pollution, non native species including trout and diseases. I actually love trout and love the food supply they provide for fishing backpackers. But I also would prefer to see the frogs return to certain areas where feasible.
- 3) Aircraft noise pollution. Its easy to escape most sounds and sights of humans in a matter of a short hike into the Yosemite wilderness with one exception. Aircraft are the one bit of human intervention which constantly reminds us that we are never truly free of human impact. Commercial air liners produce regular sounds and contrails albeit relatively minor compared with the military jets which produce appalling thundering roars which shatter the solitude of a clear summer day. Its become impossible to quietly sit for a matter of ten minutes in the wilderness without hearing the sound of aircraft. Why must airplanes fly over our wilderness where they greatly impact the experiences of visitors and the wildlife? For that matter, the Yosemite NPS helicopter is ridiculously loud compared with the NPS rescue helicopter of the Grand Canyon and other parks. With the silent technology available and used by other parks and tourist agencies, why doesn't Yosemite have a quiet helicopter for its operations?

Comments:

Correspondence ID: 700 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 23:55:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: January 29, 2016

Dear Superintendent,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship Plan during the public scoping process. My husband and I live south of Yosemite, visit frequently, and are interested in well managed wilderness and non-wilderness areas within Yosemite. Visitors to Yosemite, especially Yosemite Valley, has only increased over the years and the wilderness areas provide a more dispersed experience away from valley.

Management of the High Sierra Camps

My husband and I love the Yosemite backcountry and wilderness. We have day-hiked, backpacked, and stayed in the High Sierra Camps. We are writing in particular regarding the High Sierra Camps which are in areas designated as "potential wilderness areas." We have heard criticisms of the camps, including that they are high impact, that visitors to the camps are causing degradation to designated wilderness, that the concentrated use destroys the sense of wilderness in the vicinity, and that they are cost prohibitive.

We understand that there are impacts caused by the camps, and applaud both the Merced River Plan and Tuolumne River Plan which have thoughtfully assessed and addressed the impacts caused by the Merced Lake and Glen Aulin High Sierra Camps, respectively. After careful assessment of particular impacts, such as to water quality and due to stock use, the river plans proposed specific management measures, such as replacing flush toilets with composting toilets, limiting the number of pack strings, and removing structures within the river's corridors. We expect the same thoughtful approach to be used in assessing Sunrise, Vogelsang and May Lake High Sierra Camps.

We would like to point out that there are only five camps (excluding Tuolumne and White Wolf) within the overall Yosemite wilderness, and are serviced by a limited number of hiking trails. For backpackers who wish more seclusion there are many other trails within the extensive Yosemite trail system to utilize. Further, the camps are only open for a short period of time, approximately 2 months, which provides those looking for solitude to schedule trips outside the camp season. Finally, to address the impacts some associate with the camps, the plan will also need to address the concentrated backpacker camping that is also situated in the same areas as the camps. The longer duration of the backpacking season (as compared to the camp open period) provides the opportunity for backpackers to be impacting those areas to a greater extent than the camps. If the areas and trails are determined to be overused, all blame should not be on the camps, but a comprehensive look at all use (the camps and concentrated backpacker camping) must be assessed. The camps also provide the opportunity for those unable to backpack to experience the Yosemite wilderness. There are many visitors that would be unable to backpack to the areas staying at the camps. Many of these visitors were backpackers, but now for physical reasons are only able to experience the Yosemite wilderness through the camps. The camps also offer a way for those traveling long distances to experience Yosemite without having to bring along a lot of equipment with them. Families with young children also utilize the camps. In our opinion, this is one of the most important social functions the camps provide: exposing children to the outdoors will provide the next generation of those interested in protecting Yosemite and other natural places. Complete removal of the camps would restrict the greater Yosemite wilderness to only those that are able to backpack. The wilderness belongs to everyone, and the camps provide the opportunity for wilderness to be available to all.

There have been comments made that the cost of the camps is prohibitive or that we have given over management of the camps to a revenue hungry corporate entity. Again, as I described above, the camps provide the opportunity for those unable to backpack to enjoy the Yosemite backcountry. For many who utilize the camps, this is a "once in a lifetime" trip; with some people having tried for years to be chosen in the lottery. Although a visit to the camps may not be something I do every year, it is definitely a summer highlight for me and others.

Lastly, we would like to remind everyone that just because the camps are designated as "potential wilderness" does not mean that the only possible outcome in the revision of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan is to remove the camps and designate the areas as wilderness. We expect the revisions to look at the range of options, from leaving the camps "as is" to "removal," with thoughtful management directed at each camp's specific impacts.

Stock Management

We would also like to see the continuation of stock use within the wilderness areas. Using stock is an acceptable method of travel under the Wilderness Act and the use of stock has a long history in Yosemite. For us, encountering stock on a trail has never "decreased" the value of our wilderness experience, and many times has increased our experience by providing an look "into the past." Similar to our comments about the High Sierra Camps, we support administrative, commercial and recreational use of stock in the Yosemite Wilderness, with management directed at the specific impacts of stock.

Thank you for taking our comments,

"The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness." - John Muir

Correspondence ID: 701 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,29,2016 23:56:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Topic Question 1:

Wilderness is an American idea, and Yosemite has been exemplary in helping to forge it's "meaning" for over a century. Keeping wild lands relatively pristine while affording contemplation and recreation to people in accordance with the stated principles of the Wilderness Act requires balance, and Yosemite has done reasonably well in harmonizing safety and control with an "untrammled" experience.

YOSAR is one of the best in the world at doing a tough job.

Topic Question 2:

The JMT exit quota over Donohue Pass is overly restrictive and probably unnecessary.

The Half Dome cables should add a third line of cable, which would separate a lane for ascending and a lane for descending. A few deaths and a lot of confusion and unnecessary panic would be eliminated.

Improvements in the descent route from Cathedral Peak are wonderful for protecting the resource, and should be considered as a good prototype for other heavily traveled off-trail descents from rock climbs and peaks as identified in the future.

Pack stock should be eliminated from park trails. They are not indigenous to the environment and trails are unnecessarily overbuilt for heavy animals compared to lighter people. They take up quota space and/or are given unfair priority over walkers. True, packing is seen as a "traditional" Sierra wilderness activity, but the impact of pack animals on Park trails is large and unjustifiable. A system of human packing, or "porters," could easily supply

both the High Sierra Camps and any individuals who do not wish to backpack their own gear. And it would provide healthy work to relatively unskilled people. Many wilderness users are offended by horse shit, excess dust, and rude cowboys. Their time is past.

Comments: Competition is a healthy aspect of our capitalist system. Guiding of wilderness activities, from hiking to backpacking to peak ascents, technical rock climbing and back country skiing is a useful service for the public's safe enjoyment of traditional wilderness activities. Guides help not only those who directly hire them, but often give valuable advice, education, and warning of wilderness dangers to many others they encounter. Thus they function as de-facto, adjunct wilderness rangers. Having a single, monopoly guide service for technical climbing and backcountry skiing provided under the concessionaire does not lead to the healthy vigor provided by the choice of guides available on other Federal land, such as BLM and National Forests. You should open the Park to multiple guide services so the public may choose. Of course some assurance of competence and quality of service must be maintained, but do not be tempted to take the easy road to that by relying on only one certifying agency, such as the AMGA. They too might like to be a monopoly in the certification realm, but like having a single concessionaire, monopolies in certifying may not be healthy.

Correspondence ID: 702 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,14,2015 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Subject: my personal view of Wilderness in Yosemite N.P.

I am 85 years old and have explored most corners of Yosemite N.P. each year since 1948. As I have aged and become unable to back pack, I have occasionally used the High Sierra Camps—particularly Vogelsang H.S.C. I believe that the High Sierra Camps, together with their provisioning by mules and pack stock, are incompatible with the meaning of wildness in the Yosemite back country.

In your Wilderness Stewardship Planning process please record my very strong opinion for the removal of the High Sierra Camps from the Yosemite High Country.

Correspondence ID: 703 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: The comments set out herein are made on behalf of the Public Lands Committee, High Sierra Unit, Backcountry Horsemen of California.

Yosemite National Park (Yosemite) has a rich tradition of stock use, including private use, administrative use, and commercial use. Yosemite has highlighted its administrative use in a recent article in the Fresno Bee on December 29, 2015, where in the "Life" section there appeared an extensive article, including two photographs, relating to stock use by park rangers.

Yosemite and the National Park Service (NPS) also had a high profile entry utilizing stock in the 2016 Rose Parade.

It seems that Yosemite will do what it has to do in the forthcoming Wilderness Stewardship Plan to protect Yosemite's administrative use of stock. However, Yosemite should also focus on protecting the rights of private stock users to utilize the wilderness areas of Yosemite.

In its recently adopted Wilderness Stewardship Plan, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks took a positive step to protect private stock use in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI) by providing directly in the Record of Decision for the SEKI Wilderness Stewardship Plan that six (6) horse facilities will be established outside of wilderness. These six (6) facilities will help protect the historic tradition of stock use in SEKI and will also provide facilities from which private stock users can access the SEKI wilderness areas. We urge Yosemite to take the same step and establish horse facilities outside of Yosemite wilderness areas that will make access to Yosemite's wilderness areas possible for private stock users.

The Yosemite Conservancy, formally known as the Yosemite Fund, has regularly demonstrated its support for stock use in Yosemite by donating funds to purchase administrative stock. Further, in the Autumn Winter 2015 edition of the Yosemite Conservancy magazine there appears an article regarding preserving the equine legacy in Yosemite. The article features a picture of a packer leading a string of mules. There is also a picture of a group of rangers mounted on horses posing in front of Yosemite Falls.

Private and commercial stock enables many older and disabled visitors to enjoy wilderness areas. We urge you to continue to make Yosemite's wilderness areas accessible to older and disabled visitors through the use of private and commercial stock.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the forthcoming Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

Correspondence ID: 704 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: It is with great pleasure that we the members of the Mid Valley Unit of Backcountry Horsemen of California offer our thoughts on the upcoming work you will be doing to revise the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan. We work to keep the historic use of horses and mules as a part of our current public lands use in this country. Equine use has been a large part of Yosemite Parks history and is expected to remain there when people visit the park these days.

We hope that our comments will be helpful in your achieving objective and effective approaches to your revision work that will be beneficial to all visitors to the Park's wilderness area. We hope that your objectivity will include decisions based upon real science and not on false offerings as has been shown in the past. It is our opinion that the wording used in the 1989 Wilderness Stewardship Plan under the heading "Wilderness Stock Use" on pages 22 and 23 has been a successful and satisfactory guide for the Park administration on dealing with stock use in the Park. We feel these guidelines should remain as they currently exist and no additional restrictions are needed.

There is a minority of visitors to the Park that are very outspoken and forceful in their negative feelings about equine use within our National Parks here in California. We would hope that you would develop your alternatives in a manner that does not engender strong feelings from this minority. This minority likes to speak out on what they feel are problems that might injure the enjoyment of visitors to the Parks. In most cases these are not real problems that effect visitors to the Park, but are false statements about how the general public feels about sharing the park with horses.

We are concerned that since the public has lost much of their ability to experience horseback rides within the park originating from the valley, visitors arrive wanting to experience what it was like for John Muir to travel through this wonderful wilderness with a desire to ride a horse in that wilderness. We feel commercial horseback rides within the park need to continue as they have in the past. The commercial pack stations that provide this service also provide the park with other substantial benefits, such as clearing trails and leave no trace education for their employees and customers. We hope you will work to ensure your alternatives also do not encourage negative feelings about this wonderful way to experience the park that is needed by many aged and disabled visitors who need this service.

We thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts and we are looking forward to helping develop the revised Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

Correspondence ID: 705 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: The Disabled Equestrians Organization (DEO) represents individuals that are moderately disabled and use a horse or mule to provide them access to trails in the outdoors. The causes of their disabilities are varied, and include accidents, old age and disease. Some of the areas affected are knees, lungs, hearts, backs, ankles and eyesight. In spite of the diversity of ailments, they all share a common solution to their disabilities: they use a horse or mule to carry their worn out bodies to the places that millions of Americans enjoy: the beautiful high country of the Sierras, the rolling hills of the California coast, and many other public parks and forests.

It has come to our attention that the Yosemite Wilderness Plan is considering significant reductions in horse and stock usage. I want to remind you that some 30% to 40% of equestrians using these facilities qualify as disabled, and to deny them the right to access Yosemite is a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Park Service should instead actively promote the expansion and improvement horse facilities and trails.

Many equestrians use the horse camps at Wawona, Bridelveil and Touloume Meadows. Others ride with the commercial packers and get a chance to see the backcountry on those horses and mules. Others enjoy the trail rides in the Valley. The very minor and limited impacts caused by horses are far outweighed by the enjoyment of the riders. When I have ridden in Yosemite, the children and adults are thrilled to see horses and excited to watch us.

Let us remember that horses and mules have been a part of the history of Yosemite since it was first discovered and dedicated. John Muir rode a horse and used pack mules. Mounted units from the Army patrolled Yosemite for many years. Teddy Roosevelt and many other notable dignitaries used horses to discover the wonders of Yosemite. It is essential to note that the High Sierra Camps are serviced by pack mules, and back country trail maintenance and patrolling are done with horses. The Park Service is obligated to recognize historical usage of stock and how they played an essential role in the creation and support for the Park.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law 101-336 enacted July 26, 1990 and the Department of Justice's regulation implementing title II, subtitle A, of the ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all services, programs, and activities provided to the public by Federal, State and local governments. A disability as defined by ADA is a "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual". To watch the roar of the falls in Yosemite, see the snow-capped peaks of the high Sierras, watch the Pacific Ocean from high on a bluff above, these are truly a major life activity.

The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 requires all buildings and facilities built or renovated with Federal funds be accessible to and usable by physically disabled persons. This law forms the foundation of the legal mandate requiring federally funded facilities and programs to be accessible to and usable by physically disabled persons.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1978 states "No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity conducted by Federal financial assistance or by an Executive Agency." This Act further broadens the Architectural Barriers Act in that it requires program accessibility in all services provided with Federal dollars.

To deny disabled equestrians the right to use their horses to access the public trails is a clearly a violation of Federal law and results in discrimination against disabled equestrians. Opportunities for disabled equestrians to enjoy the same sights as able bodied hikers should not be restricted. It is also essential that disabled equestrians have a place to board their horse and park their trailer to unload their horse.

We do not want to see our funds and public funds spend on a lawsuit to enforce our rights. We would rather work with the public agencies to improve the trails, raise funds for outdoor programs, expand horse camps, and raise public awareness. Hopefully this letter will suffice to prevent reduction of horse and stock use by disabled equestrians. Otherwise we will be filing complaints with the Department of Justice and other agencies responsible for insuring compliance with Federal and State laws.

Correspondence ID: 706 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher--

I am writing in response to your scoping notice seeking comments related to a wilderness management plan that you are writing for wilderness in Yosemite National Park. Wilderness in Yosemite National Park is very important to me. I have wandered extensively in wilderness there, and it has value to me by its very existence. I know something of Yosemite wilderness, and I believe that I understand something of the challenges faced in managing the wilderness. I can close my eyes and see places there, and I think the wilderness there is a treasure to California residents, American citizens, and indeed, to residents of the world. It is not too much to say that you have been entrusted with something very precious.

I would like to offer some comments in response to your scoping notice, and perhaps offer some thoughts that you might or might not otherwise consider. First, I'd like to point out that visitor use is unacceptably high in wilderness in Yosemite, and managed poorly. It is time to apply some meaningful requirements for entering the wilderness, with a goal of user freedom once users have entered the wilderness.

Remember, commercial services may be performed...to the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of wilderness in Yosemite. Years ago, you drove a truck right through the middle of that legally binding requirement. You have never defined a need for any commercial services in wilderness, you've never defined the recreational purposes which may be performed, and you've never defined any wilderness purpose for which commercial services may be performed. And, ultimately, you've never defined an extent to which any commercial service is necessary for fulfilling the undefined purposes. I'd suggest that, currently, Yosemite National Park is operating an industrial strength, commercial recreation enterprise in wilderness. The park has economic reasons to operate a commercial recreation enterprise as large as possible, and it will be hard for park employees to see their way clear to follow the law. Nonetheless, that is what is required. You have many, many permitted commercial activities operating within wilderness, and you must go back to the beginning, follow the requirements of the Wilderness Act, and then make a determination about whether commercial services may or may not be permitted. Commercial services are not required in wilderness, and should be permitted, as documented as necessary, sparingly.

It is time for Yosemite National Park staff to provide critical leadership for wilderness management going forward. You have more money than you need, and you have incredible levels of staffing. If, in fact, 94% of Yosemite manage that trail, and its attendant use, as it enters, traverses, and exits Yosemite Wilderness.

I hope that you are not finished wrestling with wilderness use emanating from high use locations, particularly Yosemite Valley. Wilderness use in and around Little Yosemite Valley as well as Half Dome, continues to be a mess, and unacceptable in any wilderness sense. Wilderness day use is almost completely unregulated, and how can that possibly be acceptable?

It's long past time for the park to wrestle with stock use in Yosemite Wilderness. The impacts associated with stock use are long researched, well documented, and obvious in the wilderness. It's time to come to terms with those cumulative effects and associated impacts, and to lead toward real solutions.

I have downloaded a number of glossy handouts detailing issues related to trails, visitor use, commercial activities, and stock use, as you've identified them as issues in your wilderness management planning effort. You are well aware of many current issues that you must deal with. What I would point out is that your plan must apply sound concepts as derived from the Wilderness Act. You must move into the future with a sound wilderness plan. Since you haven't written a plan for nearly 30 years, it's time to write a plan that will hold up for many years to come.

Mostly these days, you seem to manage wilderness in Yosemite as though it were just some sort of wildland recreation area. But, it is designated wilderness. It requires managing to a higher standard than you have applied so far.

My expectation is that your wilderness management plan will adhere strictly to the Wilderness Act of 1964, and that your efforts proceeding from the development of that plan will be easy to implement since they will connect directly to the law.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 707 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577

Yosemite, CA 9539
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Dear Sir,

My name is Tom Barnett. I would like to provide the following initial general comments for consideration in the development of the 2016 revision to the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan:

For the record, I am a private citizen with no affiliation or allegiance to any organization, corporate entity or special interest groups. I represent no one except myself and derive zero income from my use of Yosemite National Park. Essentially I have no dogs in this fight except my passion for Yosemite and my desire to see it thrive as intended under the Wilderness Act. My comments are purely my own. I have resided in the Park gateway community of North Fork, CA since 2000. At every available opportunity I take advantage of the inspiring grandeur and magnificence that Yosemite provides. However, unlike most visitors to the Park, due to a minor physical disability that precludes me from walking long distances in difficult terrain, (oh, to be young again) I enjoy Yosemite on horseback. For the past nine (9) years, on average I have ridden my horse one-hundred (100) days a year somewhere within Yosemite National Park, mostly in the Yosemite Wilderness.

I attended the initial Public Scoping Meeting held on January 20, 2016 at the Yosemite Valley Auditorium. The meeting was professionally conducted and very informative. It is obvious that the NPS has a very daunting task ahead of it. Upon hearing the comments made by those in attendance, my impression is that most of those making comments had their eye on the hole; not on the dough-nut. The comments seemed to be narrowly focused on individual and personal interests rather than the big picture. As example, while revising the Wilderness Plan is it really necessary to conduct DNA testing on fish for speciation purposes? Should the revision process include a detailed vehicle parking analysis to facilitate the desires of a local senior hiking group? Hopefully, as the Plan is developed and honed into a final version, small, individual self-serving personal interest comments can be appropriately filtered as to their level of importance.

The presentation by the NPS went to great lengths to define and explain the concepts of what constitutes "Wilderness" as mandated by the U.S. Congress in The Wilderness Act. The plain language of the Wilderness Act, and clearly the intent of Congress was, among other preservation strategies, to prohibit the conduct of commercial, for profit businesses from operating within areas of the United States designated as "Wilderness".

In this instance, it is clear that the NPS has always and still does require specialized assistance to operate and maintain Yosemite in a cost effective manner while staying within the boundaries of commercialism established by Congress. Hence, the creation of the primary concessionaire contract that has been in place for many years. This primary concessionaire commercial operation contract serves the NPS and the public in a positive manner by being in alignment with NPS goals and missions.

Information published by NPS during the initial public scoping phase of the proposed amendments to the Wilderness Stewardship Plan indicate that in addition to the primary concessionaire contract for services within the Park, some ninety-five (95) other, separate, unrelated and additional commercial, for profit businesses are presently being permitted to operate within the Yosemite Wilderness areas under the auspices of what is called a "Commercial Use Authorization" (CUA). Apparently these CUAs allow companies, whose bottom line goal is solely financial profit, and whose alignment with NPS goals and missions is questionable, to provide catered vacation services to the general public within the boundaries of the Yosemite Wilderness.

Issuance of these CUAs needs to be closely scrutinized and as many as possible need to be eliminated. To avoid litigation claiming discrimination, favoritism, etc. the best approach would be to eliminate all CUAs and simply return Wilderness to Wilderness. There are many other locations available for commercial use where people can learn to fish, take photography lessons, learn how to climb a rock, learn how camp and backpack other than within the Yosemite Wilderness. In my view, if commercial enterprises are continued to be allowed to provide private, catered vacation services in the Wilderness, the ultimate outcome is best sung by Joni Mitchell in her song "Big Yellow Taxi": "...they paved paradise and put up a parking lot".

Being a horseback rider and spending so much time in the Park on horseback, seeing that NPS was examining stock use in the Yosemite Wilderness got my attention. After studying the preliminary information presented by the Park, (and doing the math) it appears as if private stock users camping overnight in the Yosemite Wilderness account for less than 1% of the total number of overnight campers. Accordingly, private stock use in Yosemite Wilderness should be a non-issue. Unless, of course, there is some unstated ulterior motive to eliminate private stock use in the Wilderness or from the Park as a whole. Contrarily, commercial stock use in the Wilderness is deserving of very close examination. Naturally, use of stock by the primary concessionaire to supply the High Sierra Camps is reasonable and warranted. Exactly what those pack trains ferry back and

forth might be worthy of looking into. As mentioned before, CUAs with private commercial, for-profit businesses should not be renewed upon expiration, including those marketing and providing horseback riding vacations in the Yosemite Wilderness. While recent trending data may reflect a statistical downturn in non-Park concessionaire commercial stock use within the Park for private vacation purposes, that is likely due to the declining state of the overall U.S. economy. Conversely, as the economy increases, so will the incidence of commercial stock use for private vacation purposes.

While on the subject of stock use, I find it interesting that the Park admits that "No formal mechanism is currently in place for measuring the level of private stock day use within the park". I'd suggest the Park develop a method to accomplish this. At some point in the future an issue may arise where having good sound data could prove to be beneficial.

Visitor Use and Capacity in Wilderness is identified as a current problem. NPS is examining the current trail head quota system for possible changes that will address the problem. While it is agreed that changes to the system are needed, including an overall reduction of the number of total permits issued, changes to the system in and of itself will likely not solve the problem. The current system is rather complicated. A portion of the permits are available months in advance through a difficult to navigate on-line computer reservation system. Another portion is available in real time, on a first come-first served basis at the various Park Wilderness Offices. There are at least four (4) categories of permit quotas: "trailhead", "pass-through", "exit" and "destination". Add in to the equation that the computerized reservation system and the Wilderness Offices don't always effectively communicate between themselves on a real time basis, the net result is Wilderness use and capacity problems. Why not devise a method to simplify the process of permit issuance? One approach might be to issue only date specific permits for camping overnight inside the Wilderness, similar to what is currently in place for developed campgrounds. Surely this problem is not isolated to Yosemite alone. So another approach might be to benchmark study other National Parks for possible best practices to aid in solving the problem. And don't ignore the concept of consequences. It is a very effective management tool. Make violations painful for those that are caught knowingly and willfully violating the regulations. A slap on the wrist and a \$150.00 fine means nothing anymore. A \$5000.00 fine and getting banned from National Parks would likely get a lot of attention and send a powerful message to the public that the NPS is genuinely serious about protecting paradise.

No doubt there is a need to revise and up-date the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan to better align it with contemporary use patterns and NPS policy. In doing so, let us not forget, overlook or compromise the founding and fundamental guiding principles our forefathers established. If we do, The Big Yellow Taxi will get across the Sentinel Bridge.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments.

Correspondence ID: 708 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

My husband Kevin Barry and I are members in good standing in the Sierra Freepackers and the Mid Valley Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC). We also represent the Backcountry Horsemen of America (BCHA) who has hundreds of members across the United States. BCHC and BCHA consist of dedicated men and women working to preserve the historic use of trails with recreational pack and saddle stock. Our members perform public service activities for numerous land management agencies and are continually working to educate other members and the general public on how to be "Gentle Users." The use of livestock has played an important role in the American culture. There is a long tradition of using pack and saddle stock not only in Yosemite National Park but all over the West. We are pleased to offer our thoughts on the upcoming work you will be doing to revise the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan. In the past the Backcountry Horsemen have written substantive commentary on the Merced and Tuolumne River Plans in defense of stock use in Yosemite. In spite of our letters we are disappointed that the Park Service has chosen to further limit stock use in our park. None of these restrictions are justified, as there are no explanations or studies that show these restrictions are needed. Therefore, the public is precluded from offering further comments as to whether they are justified.

Furthermore, the NPS's decision to eliminate the day rides in Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows was improper. This eliminates the opportunity for the public to enjoy a step back in history to see the Park via horseback for a few hours. Seeing the Park on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by any other means. For the vast majority of visitors, that opportunity is provided to them through the services of commercial guides. This experience is also needed by aged and disabled visitors who should be allowed to experience the park in this special way. We strongly suggest that you reinstate the commercial horseback rides within the park. We don't think that your desire to eliminate the day rides to reduce hiker-stock conflict on the trails is legitimate. My husband and I took the two hour ride from the Valley last May, and did not see this conflict. In fact the hikers on the trail were courteous, and they smiled, waved, and took pictures as we rode by.

The High Sierra Camps are another concern. There is no justification for the NPS to reduce their size and capacity as is being done at Merced Lake and Glen Aulin. These camps are historical. They are enclaves and are not part of the Wilderness in Yosemite. They should be retained and embraced as part of our heritage, and are beyond the scope of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan. We appreciate this opportunity to share our thoughts and suggestions. We hope that your decisions will be based on real science that will retain stock use in our park with no further reductions.

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 709 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: These are Wilderness Watch's comments on the scoping letter for the update of the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan. Wilderness Watch is a national nonprofit wilderness conservation organization dedicated to the protection and proper administration of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The amazing geography and qualities of this Wilderness are world-renowned. However, there are serious problems and challenges facing the Wilderness. In addition to this comment letter, we refer you to our comments on the Merced River Wild and Scenic River Management Plan (April 18, 2013) and our comments on Half Dome (March 15, 2012).

Wilderness and Wilderness Character

The 1964 Wilderness Act governs the stewardship of the wilderness system. This visionary law defines Wilderness in part as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Untrammelled means unmanipulated or unconfined, where humans do not dominate or impose human will on the landscape. Wilderness designation brings a special protection for Wildernesses and forbids the federal land management agencies like the Park Service from manipulating or dominating the Wilderness. Rather, federal agencies are required by the Wilderness Act to preserve the wilderness character of Wildernesses, in essence to protect their wildness. This mandate is reflected in the epigram written by the drafter of the Wilderness Act, Howard Zahniser of the Wilderness Society, who wrote, "With regard to areas of wilderness, we should be guardians not gardeners."

This fundamental tenet of wilderness stewardship was reiterated in a program review initiated by the four federal agencies and conducted by the Pinchot Institute for Conservation in 2001. The purposes of the study were to examine the federal agencies' wilderness programs and the critical management issues facing Wilderness. One of the eight "fundamental principles" for stewardship emphasized the need to preserve the wildness in Wilderness. As the Pinchot report stated, "Protection of the natural wild, where nature is not controlled, is critical in ensuring that a place is wilderness....Since wild is a fundamental characteristic of wilderness that is not attainable elsewhere, if there is a choice between emphasizing naturalness and wildness, stewards should err on the side of wildness.

Wilderness is as much a process as place. It is "untrammelled by man" (wild or unconfined) with "primeval character and influence." These relate directly to a process that is devoid of conscious industrial human manipulation.

With this in mind, the four issues raised in the scoping letter--visitor use and capacity, stock use, trail management, and commercial services--are important to address. In many respects, they are the same issue--that of overuse and over allocation. The scoping letter appears to tacitly acknowledge as much.

The scoping letter points out, "The Wilderness Act requires that the National Park Service evaluate the need for commercial services within wilderness (i.e. guided hiking, climbing, and stock use). This project will determine an appropriate amount of commercial services in wilderness." Additionally, the Act requires commercial services to be proper for Wilderness. We hope the agency intends its evaluation of what is necessary and proper for commercial services (i.e. guided hiking, climbing, and stock use) respects the intent of the Wilderness Act to limit commercial services to what is truly necessary and proper. Unfortunately, the appendices associated with the Merced River Management Plan (Appendix L in particular) are a great deviation from this requirement. We hope and expect the agency's intent is to correct past mistakes by doing a new analysis.

Other issues that should be evaluated include the proliferation of nonconforming structures and uses in Wilderness (for example, the use of helicopters and other motorized equipment) and resolution of the potential wilderness--intended to be temporary--by the removal of nonconforming structures and uses in the potential wilderness and the designation of those areas.

Alternatives

All alternatives should ensure that the wilderness character and wildness of the Wilderness is maintained and even improved. Improvement of wilderness character would rarely, if ever, be from active restoration activities. Rather, such improvement would come from two main areas. The first is careful stewardship and administration of recreation and other allowable uses. That way, for example, it may be possible to eliminate designated campsites, at least

in some areas, which often have nonconforming structures associated with them. The scoping letter recognizes the importance of visitor use and capacity so various methods of managing and reducing such use need to be evaluated. The second would be an agency management paradigm that recognizes the necessary restraint in administering wilderness and minimizes the impact from any nonconforming uses.

An alternatives or alternatives that live up to the intent of the Wilderness Act should be developed. Key elements to all alternatives should include:

a strong wilderness character monitoring program. This must include monitoring of agency-authorized use of motorized equipment, which should be extremely rare to nonexistent;

allowing natural processes to define the character of the wildernesses;

prohibit the use of motorized equipment and permanent structures for wildlife, cultural resource, or scientific purposes;

requiring all public uses of wilderness listed in section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act be conducted in a manner consistent with wilderness preservation. For example, this means no motorized use and no installations or structures;

ensuring that any outfitting and guiding (commercial services), if and where allowed, be both necessary and proper for wilderness;

ensuring that in the rare instance where exceptions to generally prohibited uses are necessary for management, that those exceptions be for the singular purpose of preservation of wilderness and that they be the minimum necessary (see Wilderness Act section 4(c));

reviewing policies about party size, numbers of stock, and backcountry allocations to ensure those policies meet the intent of the Wilderness Act.

Administration

The NPS properly expects visitors to experience wilderness "on its own terms" (NPS Management Policies 6.4.1). That concept goes beyond the absence of structures; it is the heart of our relationship to Wilderness. By yielding our uses and demands, we learn one of the most important lessons from Wilderness--the need for restraint. The ability to accept places as they are, and to let them be, is a primary lesson of Wilderness.

The NPS should also embrace this message in its management plan and in its stewardship and administration of Wilderness. Wilderness administrators should set the example for citizens and other wilderness visitors when it comes to restraint, self-reliance and the use of mechanized transport, motorized equipment and permanent structures.

Please keep us updated on this plan, including when there are additional opportunities for public input.

Correspondence ID: 710 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,14,2015 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Subject: my personal view of Wilderness in Yosemite N.P.

I am 85 years old and have explored most corners of Yosemite N.P. each year since 1948. As I have aged and become unable to back pack, I have occasionally used the High Sierra Camps" particularly Vogelsang H.S.C.

I believe that the High Sierra Camps, together with their provisioning by mules and pack stock, are incompatible with the meaning of wildness in the Yosemite back country.

In your Wilderness Stewardship Planning process please record my very strong opinion for the removal of the High Sierra Camps from the Yosemite High Country.

Correspondence ID: 711 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Dec,21,2015 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: I drove over 50 miles several times in the 60's to be a part of the 'Yosemite Master Plan' meetings in Berkeley. I received years later, the final plan. Horses were not a main feature, many things in the Valley were. but it seems that horses have been the main concern in implementing this plan. There is not much in the valley that has changed. I was a climber and backpacker then, for the last 35 years I have been a horseback rider and own my own horses. I have ridden in the back country with Merced Horsemen, on my own and with friends camping in Tuolumne. As far as I can see, the only part of that plan that has been implemented is more and more restrictions on horses. I guess we are few easy to exclude and you can show you are trying to implement a 'Master Plan'. It is truly a shame that by restricting access to horses you are essentially discriminating against anyone who is not young and fit enough to carry a 40# pack. GOOD WORK, I commend your mean spirit and hope that when your knees and shoulders give out, you will remember why you can't go into the back country.

Correspondence ID: 712 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to voice my thoughts with regard to the public scoping period of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

Wilderness has long been one of the most cherished and celebrated features of the American experience. For a large portion of Americans it has become imbedded in our culture and how we think of our country. No

wilderness been more influential to that effect than those within in the boundaries of Yosemite National Park. For these reasons we should take any revision of the Wilderness Plan seriously and with all due diligence for the sake of the future of this natural resource.

With that in mind I would like to offer the following thoughts with regards to how technical guiding is administered within the parks' wilderness.

I strongly encourage Yosemite National Park to expand commercial guiding in the areas of technical rock and alpine environments. It is my belief that accomplished guides provide a well-rounded wilderness experience that both minimize impact from its guests as well as increases safety.

Commercial guiding operations should be opened up to encourage a greater variety of terrain options to guests. Under the current system it is hard for visitors to the park to find a variety of the options of technical rock, ski, and alpine recreation. There is nowhere on the web to find guided options such as technical alpine climbing and technical ski mountaineering within the park.

Certification should only be one part of the requirement for technical guiding in Yosemite's wilderness. In order to protect the natural resources the NPS should look for long standing, stable companies who have a good history of operating in the National Park System. A course certificate does not vouch for ethics, responsibility and stewardship.

I believe that Yosemite should expand the permit system to local California and Nevada companies who are familiar with Yosemite's history and ecosystem. Permittees should be companies that are already aware of the unique problems and challenges faced in the Yosemite Wilderness. Companies in places Seattle, Denver and the East Coast are familiar with neither the park's history, ecosystem, visitor use nor its challenges. I believe that a permittees management should be present to understand and address wilderness issues.

There is a need for rock, alpine, and ski guide services that can serve multiple cultures and languages. Yosemite National Park is not a destination solely for English speaking Americans but is also an icon visited by guest from worldwide. I believe that there should be at least some commercial guiding operations who can safely and respectfully guide guests in other languages. Through these means foreign guests can have a positive safe experience while learning and protecting park resources.

Yosemite National Park should extent permits to companies who specialize in guiding guests with disabilities. The current plan makes it difficult to find a guide who specializes in guiding persons with disabilities in technical terrain. I believe by expanding the permit system Yosemite could do a better job of creating reasonable accommodation as outlined in the ADA.

I encourage the park to avoid companies that employ guides as subcontractors or "1099 employees". History has shown that it is hard to manage liability and often these subcontractors do not have their own liability insurance or workers' comp. Doing so in effect passes on the liability of accident or incident onto the NPS.

In closing I know that Yosemite National Park staff will do what's best for the park and its visitors. Thank you for your efforts in the scoping process and we look forward to seeing what you decide.

Respectfully,

Correspondence ID: 713 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher-

I am writing in response to your scoping notice seeking comments related to a wilderness management plan that you are writing for wilderness in Yosemite National Park. Wilderness in Yosemite National Park is very important to me. I have wandered extensively in wilderness there, and it has value to me by its very existence. I know something of Yosemite wilderness, and I believe that I understand something of the challenges faced in managing the wilderness. I can close my eyes and see places there, and I think the wilderness there is a treasure to California residents, American citizens, and indeed, to residents of the world. It is not too much to say that you have been entrusted with something very precious.

I would like to offer some comments in response to your scoping notice, and perhaps offer some thoughts that you might or might not otherwise consider. First, I'd like to point out that visitor use is unacceptably high in wilderness in Yosemite, and managed poorly. It is time to apply some meaningful requirements for entering the wilderness, with a goal of user freedom once users have entered the wilderness.

Remember, commercial services may be performed ... to the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of wilderness in Yosemite. Years ago, you drove a truck right through the middle of that legally binding requirement. You have never defined a need for any commercial services in wilderness, you've never defined the recreational purposes which may be performed, and you've never

defined any wilderness purpose for which commercial services may be performed. And, ultimately, you've never defined an extent to which any commercial service is necessary for fulfilling the undefined purposes. I'd suggest that, currently, Yosemite National Park is operating an industrial strength, commercial recreation enterprise in wilderness. The park has economic reasons to operate a commercial recreation enterprise as large as possible, and it will be hard for park employees to see their way clear to follow the law. Nonetheless, that is what is required. You have many, many permitted commercial activities operating within wilderness, and you must go back to the beginning, follow the requirements of the Wilderness Act, and then make a determination about whether commercial services may or may not be permitted. Commercial services are not required in wilderness, and should be permitted, as documented as necessary, sparingly.

It is time for Yosemite National Park staff to provide critical leadership for wilderness management going forward. You have more money than you need, and you have incredible levels of staffing. If, in fact, 94% of Yosemite National Park is designated wilderness, are you spending 94% of the park's budget on wilderness-related efforts? That can't be likely, but points up a significant management dilemma. You love to tout wilderness as a significant feature of the park, but don't seem to be managing it as a significant or vital part of the park. Wilderness is, in large measure, why Yosemite is what it is.

The Wilderness Act is clear and direct in its requirements. The use and enjoyment of wilderness today must be managed so that the wilderness will be unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness. You don't seem to be even trying to meet that intent. You are required to preserve the wilderness character, but, to my knowledge, you haven't even attempted to define the wilderness character in Yosemite National Park. Wilderness character is not generic, and one size definitely does not fit all. You have a requirement to keep wilderness in Yosemite untrammeled wilderness also needs to keep its primeval character and influence. These concepts, and many others documented in the Wilderness Act are not theoretical. They carry the force of law. We are now more than 50 years into this legally defined system of wilderness. I know that the National Park Service came late to wilderness, and reluctantly, but it's time to catch up.

In fact, it's time for the National Park Service to rally to wilderness and then lead boldly toward the future. It's time to stop parsing out convenient administrative exceptions. It is time for the National Park Service to start living by the letter and spirit of the Wilderness Act. Please stop dumbing down your management responsibilities.

There are no gradations of wilderness. There are no lesser or more significant portions of wilderness, and you must not "zone" the wilderness in order to manage portions of the wilderness as less than the law requires. There is no obligation to encourage recreation on every acre of the wilderness, however remote or easy to access. You have far too many trailheads providing easy access to wilderness, and you have a trail system in wilderness that you can't possibly hope to manage to any meaningful wilderness standard.

How do you intend to manage wilderness in Yosemite in relation to neighboring agencies? Yosemite Wilderness shares borders with several other wildernesses. How do you plan to manage those borders? Your trail system is a mess, for example, and it is very noticeable at shared boundaries. Recently, you've made a mess of your management of the John Muir Trail as it traverses and exits Yosemite Wilderness simply because you've gone years and years without addressing appropriate recreation use. How do you plan to manage that trail and its use to comply with the requirements of the Wilderness Act? Likewise with the Pacific Crest Trail? How do you plan to Yosemite Wilderness.

I hope that you are not finished wrestling with wilderness use emanating from high use locations, particularly Yosemite Valley. Wilderness use in and around Little Yosemite Valley as well as Half Dome, continues to be a mess, and unacceptable in any wilderness sense. Wilderness day use is almost completely unregulated, and how can that possibly be acceptable?

It's long past time for the park to wrestle with stock use in Yosemite Wilderness. The impacts associated with stock use are long researched, well documented, and obvious in the wilderness. It's time to come to terms with those cumulative effects and associated impacts, and to lead toward real solutions.

I have downloaded a number of glossy handouts detailing issues related to

trails, visitor use, commercial activities, and stock use, as you've identified them as issues in your wilderness management planning effort. You are well aware of many current issues that you must deal with. What I would point out is that your plan must apply sound concepts as derived from the Wilderness Act. You must move into the future with a sound wilderness plan. Since you haven't written a plan for nearly 30 years, it's time to write a plan that will hold up for many years to come.

Mostly these days, you seem to manage wilderness in Yosemite as though it were just some sort of wildland recreation area. But, it is designated wilderness. It requires managing to a higher standard than you have applied so far.

My expectation is that your wilderness management plan will adhere strictly to the Wilderness Act of 1964, and that your efforts proceeding from the development of that plan will be easy to implement since they will connect directly to the law.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 714 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: Friends and Managers at Yosemite,

I want to express my deep desire that you continue to welcome horseback riders into Yosemite. Backcountry camping, we know here the northwest, multiplies the problems surrounding the Park's carrying capacity for recreation, whether backpacking, or camping with horses. One solution I would like to suggest, is to allow more access for riders to use trailheads in the most scenic areas of the park, and to leave those trailheads for a dayride of perhaps 10 miles round trip on horseback, and to have them leave the Park to campsites outside the Park. Such a policy vastly limits the pressure and impact on the Park's trails and meadows, allows people who love the Park to see some of its most scenic views from horseback (even if they are hampered by limited time of physical disabilities). Economies in riding time could even allow more people (and/or riders) into the park by helping eliminate small groups or individual riders spending several days at a time to access parts of the Park they wish to see.

Through it all, remember that people in general love to see the horses. A horse's primeval call to another from a ridge or valley is the unmistakable identifier that the visitor has indeed escaped "civilization" and stepped back in time. Horsemen will gladly follow the rules you reasonably believe are important to make your care-taking of the Park successful.

One more thought: in many locations hikers are requested to "yield the right of way" to horsemen. There are a few problems with that: hikers rarely step off the trail far enough to make horses that are nervous of strangers (which is natural for most horses) comfortable enough to pass. To add to the problem, nervous horses get a feeling of being trapped (like between two predators), when two or more hikers step to opposite sides of the trail. People we ride with have our horses step off the trail for the hikers wherever and whenever possible, so the horses don't feel intimidated by someone they don't know being too close (sometimes within inches). But please know that hikers we meet are always so polite, and this note is in no way a complaint ...only for your information. Just another thought as you consider "rules of the road" in different areas.

So very respectfully submitted:

Correspondence ID: 715 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Mid Valley Unit, Backcountry Horsemen of California

January 15, 2016

Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Attn: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
PO Box 577, Yosemite, Ca. 95389

It is with great pleasure that we the members of the Mid Valley Unit of Backcountry Horsemen of California offer our thoughts on the upcoming work you will be doing to revise the 1989 Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan. We work to keep the historic use of horses and mules as a part of our current public lands use in this country. Equine use has been a large part of Yosemite Parks history and is expected to remain there when people visit the park these days.

We hope that our comments will be helpful in your achieving objective and effective approaches to your revision work that will be beneficial to all visitors to the Park's wilderness area. We hope that your objectivity will include decisions based upon real science and not on false offerings as has been shown in

the past. It is our opinion that the wording used in the 1989 Wilderness Stewardship Plan under the heading "Wilderness Stock Use" on pages 22 and 23 has been a successful and satisfactory guide for the Park administration on dealing with stock use in the Park. We feel these guidelines should remain as they currently exist and no additional restrictions are needed.

There is a minority of visitors to the Park that are very outspoken and forceful in their negative feelings about equine use within our National Parks here in California. We would hope that you would develop your alternatives in a manner that does not engender strong feelings from this minority. This minority likes to speak out on what they feel are problems that might injure the enjoyment of visitors to the Parks. In most cases these are not real problems that effect visitors to the Park, but are false statements about how the general public feels about sharing the park with horses.

We are concerned that since the public has lost much of their ability to experience horseback rides within the park originating from the valley, visitors arrive wanting to experience what it was like for John Muir to travel through this wonderful wilderness with a desire to ride a horse in that wilderness. We feel commercial horseback rides within the park need to continue as they have in the past. The commercial pack stations that provide this service also provide the park with other substantial benefits, such as clearing trails and leave no trace education for their employees and customers. We hope you will work to ensure your alternatives also do not encourage negative feelings about this wonderful way to experience the park that is needed by many aged and disabled visitors who need this service.

We thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts and we are looking forward to helping develop the revised Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 716 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: Dear Superintendent, Yosemite National Park:
Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide my comments on the public scoping phase of the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan. I am pleased to provide my input on each of the potential management issues. Visitor Use and Capacity:

I understand the ecological damage that can be done due to unlimited access to wilderness. I also understand the infringement on personal solitude that large groups of hikers can create. I support your efforts to manage visitor use based on trailhead quotas. I am encouraged by your consideration of changes to these quotas regarding certain zone capacities where access to more remote locations is limited by these quotas. Many of the trailheads originating within the Park see a huge number of day and overnight hikers, most of which will rarely venture farther than Little Yosemite Valley, Half Dome or Cloud's Rest. It is unfortunate that those attempting to "hike through" may be limited in their access due to the location of the trailhead. Perhaps a variety of permits, for example, on heavily traveled trails a day permit, a single night permit or a multiple night permit could be issued. Each could have an identifying color for ease in enforcement. I understand that currently there are no day permits required except for hiking to the top of Half Dome. A day permit may become necessary in the near future due to the heavy traffic on such trails as the Mist Trail which can become quite dangerous with so many hikers on it at one time. If a lottery system becomes necessary, a significant number of non lottery, non reservation permits should be made available on a first come, first served basis for these trailheads.

In regards to trailhead overnight parking, the number of spaces available should reflect the number of overnight permits issued and for enforcement purposes should be labeled permit parking with vehicles displaying a removable stub from the wilderness permit. Additional day use spaces should be made available and if day permits are issued, should coincide with that number, with stubs displayed.

My suggestions may require a substantial increase in permitting paperwork and enforcement but addressing capacity issues has never been easy for the Park Service.

Commercial Services in Wilderness:

I understand the benefits that some of the commercial services provide. They can make wilderness accessible to those who are unable to do so on their own. They can provide training and education and promote good wilderness stewardship. I also know that the commercial services have a financial interest in wilderness and will be the most vocal during this scoping process. My concern is that the commercial interests will drown out the voices of the rest of us. As the divide widens between the rich and the poor I see less opportunity for the poor among us to have the privilege to experience wilderness. I don't want individuals unable to afford commercial or concessionaire services to be left behind while those with money can enjoy the ease of access that money can buy. The Yosemite Wilderness belongs to all Americans rich or poor and it would be unfair to give advantages to commercial services that the rest of us can't have. I would hope that you keep this in mind when considering capacity and quota management.

In comments I provided for the Merced River Plan I suggested the removal of the High Sierra Camps where they prevented inclusion in wilderness. I still stand by those comments. I would like to see a contiguous wilderness without islands within it for Camps that a select few can enjoy. Where quotas are managed I do not want to see those who can afford this luxury receive preferential treatment over those who are less fortunate. Again, these public lands belong to all of us rich or poor and we should all have equal access.

Stock Use in Yosemite Wilderness:

As with the other potential management issues the Park Service must address, I also understand the need to

address the use of stock. The CUA stock operators make it possible for us to explore deeper into wilderness and allows us more time before food and water stores must be replenished. They provide a valuable service for those who can afford it. My concern, as before, is that their voices will be heard over the rest of us. They will be the most outspoken as they have the most to gain or lose. Equal access needs to be provided to all of us. From the individual backpacker who carries everything on his back to the trail rider to the hiker with his mule, Alpaca, or Llama, we all deserve equal treatment where quotas and reservations are concerned.

Wilderness Trails in Yosemite:

I have hiked to the top of Mt Hoffman so I know first hand about the "use trails". There were cairns everywhere. It was very difficult to know which to follow. We did make it to the top and found our own way down. There are arguments in favor of marked trails in wilderness just as there are arguments against, ie self sufficiency, less impact if trails are not followed. In the interest of limiting the impact of trails in wilderness I suggest maintaining and marking the primary trails while analyzing the social trails for possible inclusion into the system, with eliminating or discouraging use of redundant and unnecessary ones. Wilderness is vast and with so many visitors, I believe restricting them to one system that is maintained to some extent will be better than having hikers wandering all over the place with the potential of getting lost.

In closing, I want to stress the need to encourage young people to interact with nature and wilderness in order to provide a new generation of advocates for wilderness. These are the people I speak for. They may not be wealthy but they deserve equal access to our wilderness. Again, I appreciate this opportunity to provide my ideas and suggestions for the management of this special place, Yosemite Wilderness.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 717 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,28,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: At the age of 65 and with a bad ankle, I doubt I will ever be blessed to ride in Yosemite. Nonetheless, I feel it is extremely important to keep the park accessible to the people of this country, not restricted for the elite. Being able to ride in our magnificent parks is one of the best benefits of US citizenship and horse trail riding.

Thank you for listening to my comments.

Correspondence ID: 718 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Re: Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Mr. Neubacher,

I am writing to express my hopes that the Park Service will continue to allow private equestrian usage of Yosemite National Park. Equestrian activities are in no way detrimental to the Park and its environment. I have had the opportunity to ride my horses in Yosemite on several occasions and find it very sad that this may be prohibited in the future. Experiencing the park by horseback is a unique and wonderful way to access areas that would be much more difficult by foot.

Please do not place any additional restrictions on equestrian usage of our National Parks.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 719 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,22,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: Question 1

What do you value about the way in which the National Park Service currently manages the Yosemite Wilderness?

I am a stock owner and trail rider. I look forward to the day I can explore Yosemite Wilderness in the timehonored tradition of traveling with pack and saddle stock.

I value the long established tradition of use of pack and saddle stock in Yosemite National Park and throughout the West, and I wish to see this important historical use carried on into the future.

Seeing Yosemite on horseback is an experience that cannot be replicated by other means. For visitors that are either aged, mobility impaired, or otherwise unable to venture into park Wilderness on their own, the only opportunity to visit the park's Wilderness may be via horseback or mule.

I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy.

I value the relatively primitive and unconfined recreational experience associated with current management of Yosemite Wilderness. The unconfined nature of that experience currently affords pack stock users a modest amount of freedom, in the absence of onerous regulations, to travel, camp and graze my pack stock in park Wilderness.

Question 2

What are the most important issues facing the Yosemite Wilderness today and how should they be addressed?

I understand that the rate of reported conflict between hikers/ backpackers and pack stock users is low in Yosemite Wilderness. As Back Country Horsemen, we work to minimize visitor conflict in Wilderness through education and the practice of Leave No Trace® techniques. The WSP should avoid the false choice that visitor conflict can be addressed primarily by placing limits on pack stock use or limiting stock use on currently shared trails, in designated camping areas, or via restrictions on open meadow grazing.

In forming WSP alternatives or measures that might further restrict, reduce or curtail horse/stock use in Wilderness, the Park Service should not be unduly swayed by a lack of tolerance voiced by a subset of Wilderness visitors who object to viewing either pack stock or signs of pack stock use where such use is in keeping with widely accepted Leave No Trace® principles.

In order to reduce the potential for visitor conflict, the WSP should include proactive methods of visitor education, including the use of interpretive materials available at Wilderness trailheads, to convey to

hikers and backpackers to expect encounters with parties with pack stock. The WSP also should detail methods by which visitors traveling via foot and with pack stock could enhance communication and work toward minimizing "conflict" between user groups. Changing the expectations of individuals prior to their embarking from the trailhead appears to represent a first step in doing so.

In areas of known or documented stock related resource damage, the WSP should consider alternatives beyond simply limiting pack stock use. Such alternatives could include reroutes of trails, hardening of trail surfaces, separation of designated camping areas, and the use of portable electrical fencing or other means to contain pack stock in open meadows.

Proposed regulations should meet scientific rigor and necessity. The WSP must cite current peer reviewed studies, and those studies must be made readily accessible for public review, if science is used to justify proposed limits upon trail use, overnight camping, or open meadow grazing.

Science applied in the WSP must discern between the effects of pack stock use by private users versus the effects of parties using commercial pack stock outfitters versus the park's own administrative use of pack stock. In the absence of such science, the WSP should not seek to disproportionately burden private stock users, who comprise a small percentage of overnight Wilderness visitation.

The opinion of pack stock users is not adequately reflected in current studies and surveys of Yosemite Wilderness visitors. The WSP should include documentation of the preferences and desired experiences of recreational stock users, whose views might or might not align with views expressed by other Wilderness visitors as documented in existing social science literature.

Access to the Yosemite Wilderness at present by private horsemen is very difficult. The WSP should consider, and make efforts to accommodate, the logistical needs of pack stock users who do not enter park Wilderness via adjacent national forests or private land. For example, the WSP should address the need for adequate trailer parking at park trailheads and front country camping areas for person who haul their own horses and mules.

The Park Service may soon find that it has insufficient resources to maintain trails in Yosemite Wilderness to standards that are necessary to maintain visitor safety and resource protection. Given that the WSP represents a longrange (10 to 15 year) plan, it would be prudent to consider in the WSP the option of enlisting additional qualified partners in routine trail maintenance. For example, establishing formal agreements with qualified nonprofit organizations, such as Backcountry Horsemen of California and its partner, the Pacific Crest Trail Association, would serve to augment the agency's beleaguered trail maintenance budget and could preclude the need to either close trails or reclassify some trails as either "unmaintained" or minimally maintained. Park personnel should work in partnership with Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) to develop a parkwide equine Leave No Trace® (LNT) program that is included in the WSP. BCHC is the sole authorized equine LNT Master Educator trainer for the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (California). As such, park personnel and the WSP should consider entering into a formal partnership with BCHC for the development of a visitor education and LNT program for equine visitors to Yosemite National Park.

Correspondence ID: 720 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: I place great value in the use of pack stock as a management tool that enables federal land management agencies to maintain and enhance wilderness character. For example, use of pack stock, a primitive mode of travel, in lieu of the use of helicopters for routine maintenance in Wilderness is one means by which the Park Service can maintain historic uses and achieve greater alignment with the agency's recently adopted "Keeping it Wild" management philosophy

Sincerely

Correspondence ID: 721 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan,23,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: E-mail

Correspondence: Thank you so much for caring about our national treasure, Yosemite Park. I am 69 years old and have a great passion for horseback riding and camping with my horse in Oregon. My "bucket list" includes a visit to the park and it's wilderness areas. Since I am partially disabled, I am unable to hike much of the area, but I can see a lot from horseback. I am sincerely hoping the park continues to be receptive and accomodating to horses and pack animals in the park & wilderness area. Oregon has horse camp sites with corrals¾ newer horse camps have full hookups, along with miles of

hiker and horse trails. I hope that is also happening in Yosemite. I would love to take a day ride into it's wilderness area, sleep under the stars, see wildlife at it's natural best, take thousands of memory pictures, and come home immensely invigorated!
Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 722 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Yosemite National Park Staff,

My name is Josh Helling, and I have been a Yosemite Mountaineering School Guide employee since 1992. I have taught cross country skiing, guided backcountry ski trips, taught rock climbing lessons, self rescue, courses, and guided rock climbs in Yosemite. In the course of my mountain guide career I feel fortunate enough to have helped numerous visitors/public learn, enjoy, and experience Yosemite National Park in a highly positive way. Visitors/public that decide to sign up for a lesson, or guided experience are people just like everyone else who drive through the entrance stations of Yosemite National Park. They are people who have decided to enjoy Yosemite and it's spectacular Wilderness not just on their own, but with the added experience, and safety of hiring a guide. Many of these people have made the choice to hire a guide for the added benefit of outdoor education, highly increased safety, and for the knowledge that a local guide shares into a delicate landscape.

My concern is that the current Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship Plan is going to severely reduce, and/or eliminate visitor access to outdoor education, and remove a system of public safety which professional mountain guides offer. Another concern of mine is that visitors who choose to hire a guide will be classified be categorized as commercial users. These people are tax paying human beings and they are visitors when they drive through Yosemite's entrance stations, and they are still visitors when they make a choice to sign up for guided experience for it's added educational value, and increased safety.

Professional guides are excellent stewards of Yosemite National Park who promote increased safety, and environmental protection. I will emphasize Yosemite Mountaineering School Guides because they are certified Leave No Trace outdoor educators, Wilderness First Responders, and YMS has 47 years of dedicated experience with visitors in Yosemite National Park. This long learned environmental knowledge helps YMS keep track of changes in geology features like rockfall hazard, seasonally wet terrain, potentially hazardous weather conditions (thunderstorms & heat exposure illness) as well as human related wildlife impact concerns. This long term local knowledge is another reason the park visitors choose Yosemite Mountaineering School as an outdoor education experience.

Because there is very little information being disclosed to the public, visitors, local citizens, or local guides it makes it hard to comment in an accurate way. I have only heard very small pieces of information through word of mouth, and I feel Yosemite National Park has not had adequate public outreach to the information being reviewed. Almost anyone I speak with not only in this country, but even within our own Yosemite community does not know what is being discussed behind closed doors, and there have been minimal public access meetings for the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan. With this most of the information being shared is second hand verbal speculation. I have recently been told that visitors who hire a guide will be strictly limited, and even prohibited to public land access by route closures. These route closures will only be to those visitors who choose the seek out a guided experience of outdoor education and additional safety when they choose to hire a climbing instructor, or mountain guide. This route closure for visitors is a serious concern of mine in the way that it denies visitors access to climbing routes that are not only appropriate for the skill level of the visitor, but it also eliminates the visitor access to proper location safety decision making. Part of a professional climbing instructor/mountain guides work duty is to have conversations with the visitor about the persons skill level, pertinent health issues, past medical history, rockfall hazards, and environmental concerns that can change on a daily basis. This conversation between the visitor and a professional climbing instructor/guide is critical while choosing a safe and appropriate climb for the visitors experience. Keep in mind that these visitors come in all sizes, and all ages.

- 1- Visitors that choose to hire guides often are family members hoping to share a special mountain experience between a parent and child, or two spouses hoping to have a neutral third person like a professional guide safely guide the couple as a healthy relationship bonding experience.
- 2- These guided visitors are the offspring of parents that do not climb, yet the child already climbs on their own without parental guidance, so the parent has an opportunity to send their child out for a day with a professional climbing instructor knowing that it is an investment in their child's future safety and good decision making skills.
- 3- These guided visitors are often suffering from health issues like diabetes, heart conditions, or cancer recovery, so they are seeking the added comfort and safety of a professional guide as their climbing partner.
- 4- These guided visitors are often two friends who have climbed with each other for many years on their own, but are now hoping to learn a higher level of rock craft knowledge, safety, and self rescue technique.
- 5- These guided visitors are people who want to experience Yosemite's Wilderness through the activity of climbing as a connection to nature, yet the only way they can safely achieve this is through a professional guided experience.
- 6- These guided visitors are citizens of the United States of America accessing THEIR public land with the assistance of a professional climbing instructor/guide in a way that can make those citizens future stewards of the wilderness.
- 7- These guided visitors are people from other countries who have traveled far across oceans to have a once in a life time experience in Yosemite National Park and it's powerful wilderness.
- 8- These guided visitors are visitors, they are people who choose to do what they feel is right for their situation in life, or the safety of themselves, their family members, or their friends. They are people that share Yosemite's public land with other visitors, and the other visitors share the same public land with them-they are the same people, they are people all wanting an outdoor experience in the Yosemite wilderness.

When I hear Yosemite National Park is considering banning visitors, or restricting guided visitors from specific climbs because they have hired a guide it

makes me think that Yosemite National Park is disconnected with what they are about to enforce. I am concerned for a loss in the positive visitor experiences that outdoor education through professional instruction, and guiding shares. I am concerned for the health and safety of visitors that would be effected by this. I am concerned for my health and safety as a guide because I am now forced away from proper decision making, and forced into terrain with higher risk situations.

Another realistic concern I have is if NPS restricts guided climbs there will inevitably be backlash of unauthorized, unpermitted, uninsured bandit guides which will prey upon the chance to guide in Yosemite. There will be a new market demand from visiting climbers that still want to be guided up Yosemite rock climbs. The vast majority of public will not understand, or respect the Wilderness Stewardship Plan restrictions on guided climbs, and they will still have desire to be taken up a climb. Bandits guides will attempt to fill a new niche and there will be "back door deals" running rampant throughout Yosemite National Parks Wilderness climbs. Bandit guiding already exists on a small scale and as soon as legal guide permits restrict the visitors from popular climbing routes, many of those visitors will still find someone to pay money to climb with. Bandit guiding will then be an uncontrollable, unregulated underground market in which the National Park Service has indirectly created. This will be a serious public safety issue. The bandit guide market is real, it already exists, and it will spike high with a new market demand for guided climbs. I truly believe a direct result of restricting Yosemite Mountaineering Schools from accessing to popular guided climbs will directly promote illegal guides to enter the park, this repercussion can not be ignored.

Another rumor I am hearing is that Yosemite National Park might be allowing more guide services to gain access Yosemite National Park and this makes absolutely no sense to me if Yosemite National Park is now considering limiting guided climb access. I am both a Yosemite Mountaineering School employee, and I am a certified AMGA climbing guide. I have insight to both entities- YMS and AMGA. I will state the next sentences in my most unbiased, educated, experienced opinion. The benefit of Yosemite National Park having only one guide service is more control over how the operation is run. Also, because YMS has a single office meeting place in Curry Village the entire staff of guides see each other on a daily basis and discuss with each other location climbs in which the guides intend to take their visiting guests. This is the first step into a purposeful attempt to reduce crowding of climbs, or climbing areas. If NPS opens up guiding to multiple guide services this daily guide location communication will be lost.

What NPS staff may, or may not know is even though Yosemite National Park has thousands of challenging, technical rock climbs it actually has very few easy to moderate rock climbs. Due to steep, smooth granite walls Yosemite climbing has historically been cutting edge, world class, technical rock climbing terrain. Yosemite geology offers very little beginner to intermediate climber terrain features. There are very few good teaching areas, and as soon as more guide permits are allowed, plus restricted climb regulation goes into effect the current non-wilderness climbing areas will be directly impacted with much higher use. Guides will have nowhere else to go. At this point both guided visitors, and non-guided visitors will be severely impacted by both the Wilderness Stewardship restrictions as well as new guide permit additions.

Another concern I have is office space for the proposed multiple guide services.

1- Where will they operate from?

2- Is NPS going to build, or allot more infrastructure in Yosemite to accommodate professional guide service office space and housing requirements?

3- If NPS does not allot useable office space for these new guide services where will these outside guide services operate from?

4- Where will these new guides live? Will NPS be encouraging outside guides to stay long term in Yosemite campgrounds which is currently not allowed? Is NPS indirectly encouraging a seasonal, nomadic guide, illegal guide lifestyle of guides sleeping in their vehicles, or out of bounds camping? This obviously would be a food storage violation and now puts bear, and other wildlife at risk. Guides with homes have safe food storage at home. Guides that live out of their vehicles have very little food storage options, and bear safety would be jeopardized.

5- Where will the new guide services meet their clients each morning? It is important for the guide service and client to have phone communication prior to meeting in case of delays, or plan changes. Cell service in Yosemite is limited, so now guides trying to meet clients in the park without office space will be loitering in convenient cell service places like cafeterias, stores, parking lots, or public decks.

6- If NPS requires the new guide services to operate out of Yosemite National Park in an outside community will NPS require the clients to meet the guide each day outside Yosemite National Park prior to the guests activities? This would increase road traffic, increase roadside parking needs if guides & guests decide to carpool once they are in Yosemite. Requiring visitors to meet at an outside guide service location also greatly inconveniences the visiting guest and takes away from the visitor experience.

7- If the guide service is allowed to meet the client inside Yosemite National Park this will essentially be NPS allowing mobile office spaces. The guests will need access to rental equipment like climbing shoes, helmets, harnesses, ropes, protective rock anchors, webbing, etc. All of this equipment adds up to a lot of special storage requirements. I can only envision a bunch of oversized vehicles and towed storage trailers loaded up with gear, then sprawled out in parking lots trying to accommodate the clients equipment and shoe rental needs. This obviously is a negative impact to non-climbing visitor experiences when they are effected by guides competing for busy parking lot space. This will be an indirect impact on all visitor experience.

If I wanted to be selfish, and greedy I would support new guide service access in Yosemite. I am AMGA certified and I could develop my own guide service to operate in Yosemite. I have independent, local housing, I would increase my profit margin tremendously by collecting all of the profit and not having to share a cut of the visitor payment with YMS. Financially I could benefit from this if I were to apply for a guide permit, but I do not want to be that self centered with what I consider a negative impact on Yosemite National Park, and it's visitor experiences. I see guiding as a complex situation that is currently well managed by both NPS, and YMS. Yosemite Mountaineering School has a long standing good safety record. YMS has a world class curriculum that serves the public, visitors, and people of the world very well. YMS has a long term, dedicated staff of people who truly know, respect, and protect Yosemite's resources while instructing and guiding in Yosemite National Park. These are staff members with either legitimate company housing, or they are people already independently living in their own houses within the Yosemite, El Portal, and Eastern Sierra communities. Yosemite Mountaineering School staff members are also family members with spouses, and children that rely on a guides income to financially survive.

If the Wilderness Stewardship Plan decides to over control, and restrict guides from making their own route choice options Yosemite National Park Service will be directly responsible for unsafely forcing visitors that hire guides into location situations not based on common sense, good decision making, or safe mountain travel. I also fear my own safety as a climbing instructor/mountain guide if I am forced away from safer route locations if I am required by NPS to lead visitors up higher risk climbs.

I do understand that NPS is attempting to reduce visitor use impacts on the wilderness, and protect visitor experiences. I support wilderness preservation, and as a professional outdoor educator I have dedicated 26 years of my life to improving visitor experience. I understand that an extremely small percentage of the population may have a negative view on guiding, but it is important to recognize this is a very small percentage and should not represent the majority of public access. What is not being acknowledged either is that Yosemite Mountaineering School instructors and guides routinely help non guided visitors when they are out in the field. YMS guides communicate Leave No Trace not only to their guests, but also to non guided visitors. YMS constantly shares safety tips with non guided visitors when they are sharing a climbing route or climbing area.

Historically YMS has done an excellent job working with, or around other non guided climbing teams. Yes, once in awhile a non guided team might have a negative opinion when a guided team is on the same climb as the non guided team. This is rare, and non guided climbers have to share routes with other non guided teams on a daily basis in Yosemite. Guides can be an easy targets for some people to discriminate against. I think the low percentage of negative views should not dictate guided climb elimination of specific routes when such a high percentage of the climbing community is in support of professional guiding. Yosemite is in fact public land and guided visitors are still public too. Yes, it is important for commercial guides to be as courteous as possible when interacting with other visitors experiences, and it is shameful if a guide disrespects other visitor experiences.

Currently I feel guiding is discriminated against by being classified as commercial use, competing for public enjoyment in wilderness areas. Please remember, the people who hire a guide are the public, they are the visitors, they are the same people the Wilderness Stewardship Plan is trying to protect. I feel professional guiding is being scrutinized as a negative impact on non guided visitor experiences when in actuality professional guiding is a positive impact on visitor use and experience.

Unfortunately the current direction of the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan discriminates against visitors who choose to seek professional outdoor education and personal safety through the hiring of a climbing guide. This not only discrimination against public access to public land, but it forces negative impacts on visitor experiences. Very quickly the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan restrictions will strangle the life out of professional guiding by limiting what is allowed. At that point the visitors seeking professional instruction, or guide service will no longer have the benefit to hire a climbing instructor, mountain guide, or backpacking guide. Mountain guides are educators, they are on the frontline of wilderness stewardship. If the Wilderness Stewardship Plan cripples outdoor education by heavy restrictions it is essentially removing stewardship from Yosemite.

If anyone has any questions, concerns, or is interested in speaking to me I would be happy to talk with you.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 723 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: There can be great value towards wilderness preservation with educational, natural history, or documentary filming, and photography. Photography and film has played an important role in protection of public land since the beginning stages of the California State Park and National Park systems. Land abuse, toxic spill along seashores, threatened and endangered species, cultural heritage, Native American history, and fragile natural ecosystems across the United States directly benefited from the power of photography and various types of film making. Most, if not all National Parks, Monuments, and Historic Sites somehow have a connection to resource protection associated with photography and documentary filmmaking. Many of these precious heritage sites were established after photographs were taken, or important story telling documentaries were shared with the public.

How can someone care about what they do not know especially if they have never seen, nor heard of it? Historically environmental protection success has been associated with photography on a page with words describing the dilemma, or a voice coming through a television speaker discussed the importance of preservation as film/video images share a visual description. If not for photography, and documentary film making people may have never known about severe deforestation issues caused by logging deep into Coastal Redwood Tree forests, marshes about to be drained so agriculture could replace the last of the Central Valley's wetlands, a diminished population of California Condor on the verge of extinction, large parcels of land about to be exploited by mining, or flooded by building of dams. These environmental crisis's are not only from the past, but they will be ongoing forever into the future. If the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan bans photography, or filming in the backcountry setting it will be removing an important element with the ability to share future knowledge, and caring of the Wilderness environment.

Often a quality photograph, well done natural history film, or intelligent documentary requires a profession photographer, or professional filmmakers. Yes, professionals do get paid, but what they give back with a quality contribution of documented information is sometimes what counts the most. To remove professional photographers and filmmakers from the wilderness is equivalent to removing the public's eyes, or deafening their ears. Removing Professional photographers and film makers is a removal of Wilderness Stewards.

Environmental awareness is important, and it requires an ongoing effort to keep the public informed. Information needs to come not only the National Park Service, but other independent environmental stewards like citizens with cameras, microphones, and lenses who can document, record, and share what is current in the environment that lies behind an invisible wilderness boundary. If the public can see, and hear about what is worth saving we will forever have public full engaged as stewards of the wilderness.

Photography and film making historically has, still does, and always will be necessary tool for environmental education of the people not just within

Yosemite National Park, but also around the world. If educational, natural history, or documentary filming is banned from wilderness areas it will strip power away from wilderness conservation. The public needs to have access to wilderness whether it is limited to trailhead quotas for intimate in person visits, or long distance access to wilderness on a television, or computer screen. Not everyone can, or will venture into the wilderness to realize what is worth protecting, and worth saving, but giving public access to wilderness through the use of media can play an important role in future protection of all environments. The day people lose that connection is the day that people begin to stop caring about wilderness, and non-wilderness natural environments.

I have seen the news media loop hole get both used, (sometimes properly) and abused (because it is the only way to get NPS permission) to gain access to photography and filming in wilderness areas. It is important for news media to have access to almost everything in what is suppose to be a free country. Imagine an environmental crisis in the wilderness whether it is caused by humans, or naturally occurring in a fragile ecosystem. It can be very important to raise public awareness of the environmental crisis, so hopefully the problem can be helped, resolved, or prevented in the future. Cameras and story telling is a powerful, and simple tool to get information out, but the public should not have to rely on mainstream media news to educate them about environmental situations, or public land concerns. News media is often based on convenient, quick story location access, and brief sound bites taken out of context to what is actually relevant to the story. What then manages to make the news often is easily overlooked by front-page headlines, or "Big news breaks" that distract people away from smaller, yet still important stories. Current news then is pushed aside on a daily basis, so there can be space, and time for the next "BIG" story. An important wilderness related story then quickly gets categorized as "old news". It is critical that people beyond mainstream news media have the ability to tell a natural history story, film a documentary, or make an educational film about something connected to a wilderness setting. That person should not need an official news media credential to access a wilderness environment.

Filmmakers have played many important roles in environmental conservation. Educational films have inspired young people to grow up and become biologists, botanists, ornithologists, aquatic scientists, geologists, hydrologists, Park Rangers, outdoor educators, and many other professions that play an important role in protecting wilderness. Natural history films have enlightened people by visually sharing incredible natural phenomenon, and special moments of the natural world that are worth paying attention to. Documentaries have told stories that raised enough awareness to get people to set aside, and save precious land.

I will be the first one say commercial filming should not be permitted in the Wilderness. When I say commercial I mean commercial add campaigns, like a corporations attempting to sell products, Hollywood movies exploiting a landscape, or television entertainment shows that have no value towards the environment that they are filmed in. What I do think needs to be distinguished is the true difference between "commercial filming" and educational, natural history, or documentary filming. There is a real difference between these various filming types not only in an intangible, intellectual, educational value, or commercial sense, but also in how these film styles often work with various crew sizes, and the types of film equipment that traditionally works best for each film type.

Large budget commercial filming usually = large crew size, and large equipment footprint.

Small budget educational, natural history, or documentary filming usually = small crew size, and small equipment footprint.

Yosemite National Park already has regulations in place or visiting public. There are trailhead quotas, proper food storage regulations, Wilderness permits for overnight camping, and Leave No Trace protocol. I feel that a small educational film team, documentary film crew, or natural history filmmaker should have the legal right to tell a story in the wilderness as long as they follow all regulations that the general public is required to follow.

I now will call educational, natural history, and documentary film types of films "non-commercial" because they are not a commercial trying to sell a product, make a Hollywood movie, or entertain people with a television show that has no wilderness values. Yes, they might be getting paid to document the story, but as long as they follow the same guidelines required to the general public their footprint on the environment is the same. If you have the argument that a small film crew might be offensive to the backcountry general public I will state that the majority of the backcountry general public are actually glad to see a film crew document wilderness values. If you have the argument that a small film crew might compete for a trailhead quota please do not forget film crews are citizens of the United States that also have a right to access public land whether they are working, or not. Yes, a very small percentage of the population may not want to see a film crew in a wilderness setting, but this again is a very small percentage which should not take control of the final decision. The decision should be based more on higher percentage of supporters, rather than the much smaller percentage of deniers.

If the Wilderness Stewardship Plan is attempting to categorize all film types as a single "Commercial filming" because there is a money exchange somewhere within filming I believe this is missing the point of Wilderness protection, Wilderness values, or the true impacts of filming in the wilderness. Hyper focusing on a money exchange is an ideology issue that does not affect wildlife in their natural environment, or a persons footprints on a trail. A money exchange does not happen in a backcountry cash register setting, and resource concerns can be properly managed from a Wilderness Permit system that is already in place. Some filmmakers may not even have a budget at all to work with and may want to begin filming a project they feel is important to document. In this case is that crew denied as well if they have intent to make a film? Realistically there is no difference with wilderness resource impacts between an unpaid volunteer film crew, or a paid film crew when they walk into the wilderness, their footprint is the same just like all other visitors.

If an exchange of money is your criteria of activities allowed, or denied then all employees entering Yosemite Wilderness should be held to the same standard and follow the same criteria including Yosemite National Park scientists, Wilderness Rangers, or Search and Rescue missions because these all have an exchange of money. These NPS working positions all come with paychecks, so only Yosemite National Park Volunteers could enter the Wilderness. Please do not forget examine yourselves!

Thank you for your time reviewing my comments. I am happy discuss any of your questions, or concerns that you might have. Please feel free to contact me directly, and I am more than willing to help make Yosemite Wilderness Stewards Plan a better plan for everyone, including the future wilderness preservation through educational film.

Happy trails,

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Background

We have been hiking in the Yosemite backcountry since the mid-1990's. We have visited most of the park's backcountry, and in any given year we will visit the park dozens of times and travel hundreds of miles on and off-trail. In 2015 we spent over 100 days in the backcountry as part of 40+ trips (the mild winter helped!). It goes without saying that we love Yosemite and want to make sure that as many people have a chance to experience a natural, pristine park as possible.

General Concepts

As a guiding principle, we believe that the Yosemite Wilderness Stewardship Plan (the WSP) should attempt to maximize the number of visitors who can visit the Yosemite backcountry at a level of impact that maintains the wilderness character of the backcountry by preferentially encouraging the least-impactful methods and techniques required to visit the backcountry safely.

We support the following significant changes to current backcountry use policy:

Ban all non-administrative pack and saddle stock use, except for those with mobility impairments

Ban all backcountry fires, or restrict their use to a few explicit places such as the existing backpacker campgrounds

Significantly scale back or close the backcountry High Sierra Camps

Stop stocking backcountry lakes and actively remove fish from those that did not historically have fish

Ensure that all backcountry visitors—including day visitors—are made aware of current regulations and leave-no-trace principles. Better enforce all existing backcountry regulations

Use measurable, objective resource impacts, and not simply the number of visitors, for setting trail quotas, and address impacts as locally as possible

Many of the items we are proposing banning or curtailing above may be considered part of the "traditional" backpacking experience, but in fact what has comprised "traditional" backpacking has constantly been changing, trending over time from high-impact techniques to lower-impact ones. John Muir used bough beds and bonfires to sleep comfortably, and for many years the Sierra Club led camping expeditions with hundreds of campers and many head of stock. Joseph LeConte used elaborate base camps for his expeditions in the Sierra. These are all historical practices that are not allowed today. While a growing population and larger number of visitors puts more pressure on the backcountry, it's perhaps ironic that modern technology and better techniques allow a larger number of visitors to tread much more lightly on the backcountry than their predecessors.

Backcountry Campfires

The current policy is to allow campfires in only existing fire rings below 9600' in elevation, with certain exceptions based on fire risk, local fuel availability, seasonal fire risk, etc.

Based on the large--and growing--number of fire rings we have encountered in the back country, this policy has not been effective at maintaining, much less reducing, the number of fire rings in the backcountry. Unfortunately, the impacts of fire rings can last decades or longer--once rocks are arranged into a clearly man-made circle, they tend to remain that shape indefinitely, even long after the other impacts of the campsite have long since disappeared.

On any given weekend trip we will encounter--and restore--several fire rings that based on our estimation are not legal per current policy. Unfortunately, we regularly encounter new rings in areas where on previous trips we have found none.

Problems with the current policy are:

Enforcement: If a ranger encounters a backpacker with a campfire, there is no way for a ranger to know if a backpacker's fire is in a new or pre-existing fire ring, nor is there a way for the backpacker to know if the ring is a legal pre-existing ring or was constructed illegally

Proximity to water: Backpackers tend to have fires near their campsites, which must generally be 100' from water. This is a fair distance to haul the amount of water necessary to extinguish a fire, so it's not surprising that we have encountered several fires that were not adequately extinguished, even after the backpackers had broken camp hours earlier.

Off-trail proliferation: We understand that rangers will rehabilitate fire rings they encounter on their regular patrols, but these are usually restricted to existing trails and popular areas. Fire rings built off-trail and in remote, rarely-used places are not likely to be restored--or even encountered--by a ranger.

Uncertainty concerning restoring existing rings: As a rule we will scatter and restore a fire ring we encounter that:

Has been constructed since our last visit to the area (and is thus "new" and not "existing" as of the inception of the current policy)

Is not at a legal campsite (too close to the trail, water, etc.)

Is in a location where it is unlikely to be used again and doesn't appear to have been used more than once (which is the case for most off-trail/backcountry fire rings)

The challenge with the current policy is that it's not possible to know when a fire ring was built, and thus in many cases to know if it's legal or not.

Difficulties with restoration. Even if a fire ring is clearly illegal, it is very difficult to restore one--much more so than removing trash or other impacts.

Blackened rocks must be scattered black-side-down, and coals must be buried and covered with soil. In some places (especially the remote areas of northern Yosemite) we have found "partially-restored" fire rings--where a few additional large rocks were placed in existing rings to discourage future use; this restoration technique does not remove the clearly artificial blight of the ring.

The Wilderness Stewardship Plan should consider the following changes to the existing fire policy:

Ban all fires. This is our preferred alternative. While in the distant past campfires were a requirement for cooking and safety, this is no longer the case--many inexpensive, lightweight, portable stove options are available to backpackers. Also, the current policy does not allow for fires to be relied on for cooking or warmth: it's impossible to know if there will be sufficient "dead and down" wood, and even if such fuel exists, an existing ring may not (or no longer) exist at the campsite, so carrying a camp stove is a requirement for those who want to cook. The guidance to build small fires using small pieces of wood doesn't lend itself to a large bonfire that can provide significant warmth. Also, in winter, when a warming fire might be most useful, the deep snow makes it impossible to locate existing fire rings to use. Note that campfires have been banned in other high-use Sierra wilderness areas such as the Desolation Wilderness. We do acknowledge that there are LNT techniques to constructing campfires, but these generally depend on very specific conditions, such as sandy or loose soil free of organic matter that is sufficiently deep to build and later bury a fire pit. In our experience such places are rare in Yosemite--except immediately next to water sources, where a fire would be illegal anyway.

Ban all fires except in specifically-indicated areas, such as the the backcountry campgrounds at Lake Eleanor and near the High Sierra Camps. This would provide opportunities for those who want a fire at these specific locations. However, we believe that a uniform policy would lend itself to better self-enforcement ("no fires at all" vs. "no fires, except...")

With either #1 or #2, consider allowing for the use of small, portable wood-fueled stoves (Sierra/Zip stoves), subject to stove size limits, elevation restrictions, fire risk, and other restrictions. Users should be educated as to the correct way to gather wood for and dispose of ash from these stoves. We have no experience with these stoves and can't say how safe they are, but they appear to use a small amount of wood fuel that could be scattered with minimal impact.

The High Sierra Camps

Our introduction to the Yosemite backcountry was visiting the High Sierra Camps, and only after several seasons of visiting only the High Sierra Camps did we take up "real" backpacking and travel beyond the five backcountry camps. Undoubtedly many people have started--or are finishing--their backpacking careers at the High Sierra Camps.

On the other hand, as we have traveled farther from the camps to areas less visited, the impacts that the High Sierra Camps have on their surroundings--

especially trail degradation along their stocking routes--have become apparent. The trails that stock the camps are in significantly worse condition than almost any other backcountry trails, and there is a noticeable difference between the camp stock routes and the non-stock segments of the High Sierra Camps loop.

In our opinion the trail damage is a bigger problem than the camps themselves. A backpacker may travel on dusty, manure-covered, "roto-tilled" trails for miles, but most camps are visible only a short distance from them. We also don't believe that over-constructing the trails to mitigate stock impacts is effective or desirable: based on our observations neither hikers nor stock want to hike on rip-rap, stone causeways, or similar, and often such improvements transform a narrow trail into an eyesore: the Rafferty Creek causeway that cuts through the meadow north of Tuolumne Pass dominates the views of this meadow from near Evelyn Lake or Rafferty Peak.

The WSP should consider the following alternatives for managing the backcountry High Sierra Camps (e.g. all except White Wolf and Tuolumne Meadows):

Close all the camps. Retain the existing (or to-be-built, in the case of Merced Lake and Glen Aulin) composting toilets to reduce impacts of human waste, and retain the food storage lockers for bear protection. Remove the shower, bath, kitchen/dining room, storage, and packer-related buildings. If feasible, continue to provide treated, piped drinking water. Essentially the areas currently occupied by the HSCs would be managed as backpacker campgrounds. With these changes, it is possible that the former camps could qualify for addition to the Yosemite Wilderness.

Keep the camps minimally open. Provide tents, cots/mattresses, treated drinking water, composting toilets, food storage lockers, and a communal dining room, but require all visitors to carry their own sleeping bags, food, stoves, and fuel. No showers, firewood, food, cooking services, or refrigeration would be provided, so there would be no need to pack provisions, propane, linens, wood, etc. into the camps, except as needed to support the minimal camp staff (probably 2 people/camp). Ironically, given the advancement in lightweight backpacking gear since when we first visited the camps, our packs would actually be lighter under this scenario than they were when we visited the full-service camps in the mid-90's.

For alternative #1, the number of visitor nights currently allocated to High Sierra Camp use, including camp staff, at a minimum should be added to the appropriate trailhead quotas since if anything a backpacker's impact, especially on the trails, should be less than the impact of a current High Sierra Camp visitor. For #2, the capacity of the camps should be re-evaluated based on the new, lower per-visitor impacts.

We don't believe that a minor downsizing of the size of the camps, as was done with Merced Lake or Glen Aulin recently, will materially reduce the impact of the camps, especially the trail impacts due to stocking. Even a single pack train that is resupplying a trail camp can cause significant trail damage, so any scenario that still requires several pack trains per season for setup/tear-down will continue to result in trail degradation. We also don't believe that "better" trail construction techniques are an appropriate mitigation for stock impacts; the result of such over-built trails is a manure-covered eyesore that in practice is avoided by both hikers and stock and has no place in the Yosemite backcountry.

Reserving and Obtaining Wilderness Permits

Over the past few decades we have obtained hundreds of Yosemite backcountry permits. We would like to propose that the YSP implement the following changes to streamline the permit process, especially for those who visit the park regularly:

Those who have reservations should be able to print out their own permit and avoid the need to visit a permit station prior to their trip. This would allow for backpackers to arrive before the permit stations are open and get an early start--and free up time so that rangers can provide more assistance to those new to Yosemite. It may also reduce unnecessary driving--such as driving to Tuolumne Meadows to pick up a permit then backtracking to Sunrise or May Lake trailheads. An on-line video and short quiz could be used to cover and confirm understanding of the current backcountry policies (e.g. all the items printed on the back of the current permits) as well as any seasonal/trailhead-specific concerns prior to making the permit available for printing. (This is similar to how the CalFire campfire/stove permits are currently issued).

To ensure that spots reserved and self-printed that aren't used are made available for others, it can be required that those using such permits drop off a receipt at any permit station--ideally in a one-way tamper-resistant slot. Lack of a receipt would allow the reserved spots to be freed as "no shows" and made available to others.

Yosemite should provide a way for frequent visitors to bypass the review of regulations--excepting of course any new or exceptional changes. As above, this would provide more time for rangers to assist those new to Yosemite. Some other parks (Zion, Grand Canyon) have special programs for frequent backcountry travelers.

We have noticed that many visitors entering the park from surrounding areas do not always follow Yosemite-specific regulations--such as the ban on dogs within the park. Yosemite should consider requiring that such visitors obtain and sign a non-quota permit confirming adherence to Yosemite regulations. These could be provided by the surrounding agencies or made available online for self-issue (they would not be valid for travel on their own).

Allow for self-registration for trips from Yosemite Valley during the non-quota/winter season. The visitor center does not make permits available until 9:00, and the rangers who handle permits are often busy helping other visitors. The delays waiting for the visitor center to open and to wait for a permit take precious time from already-short winter days.

Quota System

First of all, the flexibility of the trailhead quota system should be maintained as much as possible--that is, we would be opposed to any changes that require camping in designated areas beyond those already in place, or that require sticking to a specific itinerary, especially past the first night.

One limitation of the trailhead quota system is that for popular trailheads, almost all use is concentrated at a few popular destinations, even if there are large under-utilized areas served by the same trailheads that could accommodate more visitors. The quotas are set based on impacts at these few concentrated areas. To address this limitation we suggest two changes:

Creating more specific "pass-through" trailhead quotas to provide finer-grained control

Create cross-country quota "zones" for under-utilized areas that either have no obvious trail accessing them or that are accessible only via popular trails whose use is elsewhere.

To prevent abuse, these permits should require camping at least 1+ miles from any trail or other location-specific popular destinations on the first (and possibly subsequent) night(s).

For #1, we would suggest the following changes to two popular "pass-through" quotas:

Split the current "Happy Isles to Little Yosemite Valley pass-through" quota into:

Happy Isles -> Merced Lake (River Trail pass-through, no backtracking to Sunrise)

Little Yosemite Valley -> Sunrise Creek/Clouds Rest (JMT pass-through)

This would allow better usage monitoring and control of the LYV/Half Dome traffic and prevent contention between JMT/Half Dome hikers and those traveling to Merced Lake and beyond.

Split the "Glen Aulin pass-through to Cold Canyon or Waterwheel Falls" quota into:

Glen Aulin -> Cold Canyon/PCT (pass-through, no backtracking to the GCT)

Glen Aulin -> Waterwheel Fall/Grand Canyon (pass-through, no backtracking to the PCT/Cold Canyon)

Glen Aulin -> Murphy Creek (pass-through)

This would allow for better usage monitoring and control of north-bound PCT/TYT hikers as well as better monitoring/control of the GCT corridor.

For #2, we would suggest considering the following new cross-country quotas:

Tenaya Canyon pass-though/Mirror Lake exit. Require camping below the major cascade past the "Do not continue" sign on Tenaya Creek. Currently those who want to explore Tenaya Canyon must use the extremely popular Sunrise Lakes trailhead (now that the Olmsted Point trailhead has been removed from the system) despite the minimal overlap of these two destinations. The Mirror Lake exit requirement would help ensure that this permit is only for those traveling down Tenaya Canyon only.

This entry could be closed when travel down Tenaya Canyon is not safe due to high water or ice.

Mt. Hoffman Area: Between 120 and south of the Yosemite Creek/Tuolumne Peak/May Lake trails, excluding the Ten Lakes basin.

The "Boundary Hill" area: Between 120, Tamarack Flat, and the El Capitan/Eagle Peak/Yosemite Creek trails.

Morrison Creek/Double Rock: Between 120, the Pate Valley Trail, the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne, and the Yosemite Creek trail.

Cathedral Creek: The main and south forks of Cathedral Creek away from existing trails.

Clark Range: Between LYV, the Merced River Trail, the Red Peak Pass/Ottoway Lake trail, and the Illilouette Creek trail.

Determining Trail Quotas

While the Wilderness Act was created in part promote opportunities for solitude, we do not believe that this should be construed to mean that the number of visitors (or "visitor encounters") should be managed to in isolation. The main metric that should be used to determine capacity is the measurable impact of the visitors on an area, not merely their number or count. Safety, such as on the Half Dome cables, would be a secondary consideration, although one that probably applies only to Half Dome.

While there are many busy trail corridors within Yosemite, there are also many opportunities in Yosemite for solitude--often just a short walk away from these busy corridors. Also, many hikers enjoy the camaraderie of popular "signature" hikes such as the High Sierra Camps loop, Half Dome, the JMT, or the PCT; in fact, hiking with others and meeting other hikers is an important part of the backcountry experience for many. Those who wish to "avoid the crowds" can go off-trail, travel in early or late season, or head to the more remote areas of the park.

The Park Service should come up with scientific, measurable ways of determining visitor impact and should set baseline values for these metrics so that decisions to increase or reduce quotas are fact-based. Examples:

Trail incision (depth below ground level), branching/braiding (# of parallel paths), or widening (width beyond typical trail widths)

Area of bare/impacted ground

Length of unofficial/social trails

Number of cut branches/logs (excluding trail maintenance)

Presence of litter, manure, fire rings, charcoal, stacked rocks, rock walls, etc.

When a resource becomes degraded beyond a baseline acceptable condition the solution should be applied as locally as possible; e.g. restricting camping within an impacted area. Equally important, there should be a way to review areas whose impacts are below the baseline and increase the appropriate quotas.

Old/Unmaintained Roads and Trails

Yosemite has many abandoned roads and trails that are still in very good condition- in most cases no attempt appears to have been made to restore these old routes when they were abandoned, so most of the "hard" improvements made for them (rock work, culverts, flattened bed, etc.) are still in place.

We would propose maintaining the following roads and trails minimally, mainly to prevent degradation of these historical routes by hikers navigating around fallen logs and other obstacles.

The Old Big Oak Flat Road should be periodically logged between Cascade Creek/Gentry's and Rainbow View. There are several large deadfall along this portion, and working around them can result in erosion of the historic roadbed and damage to its impressive retaining walls and other rock work. A few logs are sufficiently large and steep that climbing over them is potentially dangerous. Also, the chaparral (manzanita) should be periodically pruned so that it doesn't completely encroach on the roadway. (There are few logs between Rainbow View and the valley, and the several sections of rock slides below Rainbow View present more of an obstacle than existing logs.) Note that some park service maps still indicate that this old road is a maintained trail, and it is the route of the "Rockslides" cross-country trailhead.

The old Gentry road spur from Cascade Creek to the El Capitan trail should become the marked route from the Cascade Creek bridge to El Capitan. This would require minimal logging since the roadbed is in excellent condition--and is a overall better "trail" than the official trail from Gentry's for El Capitan-bound hikers heading from Tamarack Flat or the Foresta trailhead. The current trail requires an unnecessary drop in elevation to Gentry's--a relic of its former start at this previous ranger station.

The old May Lake/Glen Aulin trail that heads over a pass east of Tuolumne Peak should be periodically logged. The southern half of this trail is popular for those doing day hikes from May Lake or climbing Tuolumne Peak and use trails are forming around existing large downed logs. The trail is otherwise in excellent condition, provides a scenic alternative to the comparatively busy "Raisin Lake" route between May Lake and Glen Aulin or Ten Lakes, and would require minimal maintenance.

The Old Tioga Road from Yosemite Creek campground to the North Dome/Porcupine Creek trailhead should be periodically logged. This allows for several loop trips in the Yosemite Creek area. Traveling the old road is currently difficult due to many large downed logs and in a few areas numerous new trees growing in the roadbed. Note that this section of road is marked as a maintained trail on several park service maps.

Some sources claim that the North Mountain trail is no longer maintained, but it is still on park maps and it was partially logged in 2015, but it is difficult to follow due to encroachment by weeds and brush. As this trail provides a good shoulder-season mid-elevation destination, it should be maintained to the lookout tower so that it remains passable as the area recovers from the Rim Fire.

Pack and Stock Use

In the past it was not feasible to travel in the backcountry without pack stock due to the bulk and weight of various gear. Nowadays, however, backpacker can be self-supported for several days--long enough for most itineraries within Yosemite--carrying a comparatively lightweight backpack on foot. Except for those who have bona fide mobility needs (see below), there is no reason to continue to allow the use of pack stock in the backcountry.

The impact of a stock animal on trail and at camp is at least as much as a backpacker--and almost certainly much higher. Thus, for the same impact on the backcountry, when choosing to allow 2 or more backpackers or a single rider and one head of stock, the choice must be to favor the lower-impact mode of transportation that enables more people to visit and enjoy the backcountry.

While it may be the case that stock animal waste--manure and urine--do not pose a biological risk to humans, plants, or animals, these impacts still have an aesthetic impact on the backcountry and detract from the experience of hikers who have to smell or walk in pack stock waste. In many ways such waste is not unlike litter. Backpackers are not allowed to dispose of nut shells or fruit peels in the backcountry, despite the fact that these (also) pose little risk to native plants or animals. On the other hand, their aesthetic impact is much less than stock waste, especially in terms of smell--yet they are not allowed to be left behind ("pack out all waste") while stock waste is. Historical practice or precedence is an insufficient reason to allow pack animals to continue to pollute the backcountry.

In spring 2016 we witnessed a pack train that was resupplying Vogelsang High Sierra Camp stop in Fletcher Creek (below the camp, fortunately!) and stop while several animals urinated in the creek. This pack train was under control of the wrangler. Allowing this while impressing on backpackers the need to dispose of waste far from water creates an obvious hypocrisy and inconsistency in the regulations that casts doubt on the rationale supporting them, ultimately undermining them and the authority of the Park Service.

We would propose the following for the WSP:

Except for #2 and #3 below, ban all pack and riding stock, including trips that start outside the park. Modern gear and techniques no longer require stock trains to haul heavy supplies into the backcountry.

Allow stock use only for trail maintenance, stocking backcountry cabins, ranger patrols, rescues, and other administrative needs. The "minimum tool" concept should be used to ensure that such use is only to the extent needed to meet these needs.

Consistent with the ADA, allow travelers with bona fide mobility impairments that prevent them from backpacking to use pack stock to the extent necessary to have a backpacking experience similar to that which backpackers can enjoy.

One other possible exception to #1 may be the PCT, which was created as a "hiking and riding" trail, although after the park was created. If existing rules require that saddle stock be allowed on the PCT, such use should be allowed only to the extent needed to comply with these rules.

Fish and Lake Stocking

Most Sierra lakes did not have fish in them before they were stocked. Put simply: fish are non-indigenous, invasive species. Much effort is put into removing other invasive plants and animals; it doesn't make any sense why fish are exempted from this policy. There is no need to have fish in the lakes--they are not a reliable food source for travelers. Also, it has been observed that lakes that do not have fish have fewer near-lake impacts due to the discontinuance of fishing.

We have observed that the lakes from which the Park Service is removing fish (Obelisk, Budd, Roosevelt, 9566 (between Hoffman and Tuolumne Peak)) have noticeably better water clarity than those that still have fish in them.

We would thus propose for the WSP:

Discontinue all stocking of Yosemite lakes

Actively remove fish from lakes that historically didn't have fish

Day Use Issues

Day users don't get same overview of backcountry regulations or general leave-no-trace practices as backpackers. In the areas with heavy day-visitor use, we have frequently seen examples of behaviors that could very well be because of ignorance of park use policies--policies that overnight backpackers are made aware of as part of the permitting process:

Tissues and TP left behind (not "packing it out")

Peels and shells left behind

Pets/dogs on unpaved trails (Yosemite Falls, Four Mile Trail, Inspiration Point)

Drones (Mirror Lake/Meadow)

Large stone piles (ducks/cairns, esp. near Mirror Lake)

The WSP should consider solutions that would inform day-users of appropriate back-country usage. One possibility might be to require non-quota permits that could be self-issued after a video/short quiz on a website, at kiosks, or at any ranger or visitor center. The purpose of such permits would not be to control the number of day hikers but rather to educate them on backcountry rules and regulations. Note that non-quota day use permits are required in some areas, such as the Desolation Wilderness.

Commercial Use

Given the popularity of the Yosemite backcountry, it is hard to argue that commercial services are required for providing access to recreational opportunities. Most popular trailheads quotas would still fill up with no commercial users.

We would propose:

Discontinue all commercial overnight backcountry use.

Allow commercial use, but provide priority to non-commercial users. Do not allow commercial use for trailheads that fill to quota regularly during the weeks that they normally do.

For #2, where, when, and if commercial use is allowed, give priority to smaller group sizes, educational, and non-profit groups, and require that all groups have an Leave-no-Trace trained/certified leader and follow LNT techniques.

We believe that #1 is the preferred option for commercial use in a park as popular and accessible as Yosemite.

Miscellaneous Suggestions

Access to Hetch Hetchy Area

The limited Hetch Hetchy hours--combined with the fact that the backpacker's campground is behind the locked gate--create an inconvenience for those who drive to the park the evening before a Hetch Hetchy trip, or for those who want to put in a long day hike or "out" day and return to the dam area after the gates are locked. The following should be considered so that the security needs of the dam do not impact recreational use of the Hetch Hetchy area:

Provide a phone number or bell at the Hetch Hetchy entrance station to allow for getting the gate opened at any time.

Move the locked gate to the area just past the backpacker's parking area and campground; that is, close the loop road and day-use parking area. A license plate reader camera could collect plate numbers off-hours if needed.

Use less-intrusive and less-restrictive means of securing the dam site (the "minimum tool" concept)--on-site security personnel, security cameras, etc.

Finally, it should be noted that San Francisco chose to locate the dam in an existing National Park, and providing recreational opportunities in the Hetch Hetchy area is an obligation placed on the city in the text of the Raker Act. To the extent that there is a way to address the security concerns that doesn't impact recreational use of the area, these should be pursued and implemented.

Ducks, Cairns, and Flagging Tape

The use of ducks, cairns, and flagging tape as navigational aids is not consistent with leave-no-trace practices, and their use should be explicitly prohibited. Note that these techniques are often useless for their intended purpose--it is impossible to know what route such an aid is marking, or even if it is on- or off-route. Worse, blindly following a trail of such markers can result in a false sense of security-- someone may think they are following a trail but end up on a dangerous climber's access or retreat route. GPS devices are now inexpensive and pervasive enough to provide for waypointing and tracking for those who need navigational assistance.

Proposed Wilderness Additions

The park service should work with the City of San Francisco to get title to the various city inholdings (Poopenaut Valley, Lake Vernon, Miguel Meadow) so that these can be added to the Yosemite Wilderness.

If the High Sierra Camps are converted to what are essentially backcountry campgrounds, the camp areas should be added to the Yosemite Wilderness

since it appears that the remaining man-made structures (composting toilets, bear boxes) would not disqualify them.

Group Size

The Park Service should consider reducing the maximum group size to 8 on-trail and 6 off-trail. We have observed that large groups have a disproportionate impact compared to smaller groups. Such a reduction in group size may very well ultimately end up allowing more people to visit the backcountry for the same net impact.

Signs

Many trail signs have disappeared over the past 10-15 years. It is not clear if this is a result of vandalism or policy. These signs should be replaced with ones consistent with the typical Yosemite trail sign (rough-cut rusted metal with cut-out lettering).

Pets

We are in favor of the current rules prohibiting dogs and other pets in the backcountry. We have unfortunately seen an increase in the number of dogs seen on trails that prohibit them. One problem is that there are a few exceptions to this policy that are not well-defined. Pets are allowed on paved trails- does this include trails that were once paved but whose pavement is now severely degraded (such as the Four Mile Trail/Panorama Point trail and even the JMT through Little Yosemite Valley)? What about service animals? We have received conflicting opinions about whether they are allowed. The Park Service should make sure that the exceptions are clear and not subject to interpretation.

Enforcement

Creating more and more regulations won't make any difference if the existing regulations are not enforced. We would encourage the Park Service to to whatever it can to make sure that there are sufficient resources to protect the park. Perhaps some of the changes proposed here, like allowing those with reservations to self-print their permits, will free up resources for better enforcement- or at least education. We have also seen a few cases of volunteers being use for enforcement (checking permits); perhaps programs like this could be expanded.

Thank you for taking these numerous (!) comments into consideration!

Correspondence ID: 725 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: I am writing in hopes this gets to the planning committee for Yosemite Wilderness.

I know that the new plan calls for a significant reduction in the High Sierra Camps and I would like to speak out against minimizing and/or discontinuing the camps all together. These camps have a minimal impact on Yosemite's wilderness and the staff at these camps and their managers and staff, make a great effort to be ever mindful in their positions, always thinking of new ways to further minimize their impact on the high country. That being said, these camps and the ranger lead educational loop trips are (in my opinion) ESSENTIAL for continuing to foster future stewardship towards Yosemite and all National Parks. There is nothing in the world like being in the high country in Yosemite National Park, if I could live there year round I would in a heartbeat. I have had the privilege of being forever changed by hearing such ranger lead programs at Merced Lake, Sunrise and Vogelsang. Talks that opened my eyes and further deepen my affinity and passion to preserve Yosemite and all National Parks!

These camps are vital to Yosemite's survival and were brought forth and put into place to educate and give the public the opportunity to do just what the National Park system was set in place for: preservation of nature, for the enjoyment of future generations. I cannot wait till my children are old enough to make the trek in to one of these camps, so that they can witness the grandeur and awe of her wilderness. Without these camps many people young and old won't be able to make the long hikes in and back on their own and therefore will miss out on an incredible life changing and eye opening experience. Not to mention missing out on the enlightening educational programs, chocked full of information given but their knowledgeable and irreplaceable ranger guides.

I URGE you to help the high sierra camps in their quest to further reduce their footprint, listen to their ideas and assist them without closing them down. Give them your support and keep the camps and the ranger lead loop trips alive!

These experiences and trips in a few short days impact more people for the rest of their lives than anything else the park has to offer!!! More people talk about these trips and return with more of their friends, families and loved ones (who then themselves spread the word), than any other National Park!

I appreciate your time and attention in this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 726 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: RE: Wilderness Stewardship Plan Scoping Comments

Dear Superintendent Neubacher:

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the scoping process for the Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship Plan (WSP). As you know, the SFPUC has a strong interest in the management and stewardship of the Yosemite Wilderness, as most of the drinking water for 2.6 million people in the Bay Area originates in watersheds within this wilderness. The SFPUC and the Yosemite National Park Service (NPS) have a long history of cooperation with the common goal of protecting water quality and park resources.

The SFPUC and NPS have a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for Comprehensive Management of Watersheds Supplying the San Francisco Regional Water System within Yosemite National Park. The MOA includes actions for water quality protection for approved and standby water supply sources for the Hetch Hetchy Regional Water System (HHRWS,) as well as actions to meet environmental stewardship objectives.

As part of this MOA, the SFPUC funds programs including NPS wilderness patrols aimed at enforcing regulations designed to prevent water quality impacts; NPS visitor education programs regarding watershed management, leave-no-trace principles, and wilderness use principles; and NPS facilities programs that prevent and/or mitigate water contamination. The SFPUC also funds core and special programs related to environmental stewardship of the Tuolumne River watershed.

With this understanding of our shared interest in the stewardship of Yosemite's Wilderness and watersheds, please consider the following scoping comments for this important planning effort.

Trail Management

Trail management is an important issue for the SFPUC. Unmaintained, informal, and poorly located trails can cause erosion and resource impacts, and can have site-specific and cumulative impacts to water quality from increased sediment transport. The Yosemite trails and wilderness restoration crews do an excellent job of maintaining and restoring trails to prevent and/or mitigate water quality and resource impacts. We understand that there are trade-offs with the amount of support (i.e. pack stock and helicopter) needed to facilitate this important work, but believe that a robust trails management program is integral to protecting wilderness character and water quality. Concerns identified in the annual Hetch Hetchy sanitary survey update should be considered in the trails maintenance work planning. Trail maintenance near watercourses (especially at lower elevations) should be prioritized.

NPS staff confirmed that in the existing trails management program, all trails are supposed to be built and maintained to accommodate stock use. We believe that maintaining all trails to this standard is not the most efficient use of trails management resources, and is not appropriate in all areas. We recommend the WSP adopt different levels of trail maintenance depending on the type of use and resource sensitivity, rather than the existing practice of attempting to maintain all wilderness trails to be "stock-ready." We also recommend limiting the number of trails that can be used by stock, especially in sensitive areas near the Tuolumne River.

Trails that are "stock-ready" should then be differentiated in maps and applicable permits from those that are not. Many user-created "informal" trails exist in Tuolumne River watershed wilderness areas. These trails create erosion and sediment transport that are a potential water quality concern, and also often impact sensitive resources such as meadow and riparian areas. We recommend the plan adopt a formal process to review informal, user-created trails on a periodic basis and then either remove and restore them or formalize these trails (e.g. add them to the park trail inventory and include in the regular maintenance schedule). Specifically, we recommend formalizing high-use informal trails in the Tuolumne River watershed such as the Budd Lake Trail and the Fisherman's Trail to Glen Aulin.

Stock Use

Wilderness stock use and associated potential water quality impacts are also an important issue for the SFPUC. NPS research has identified measureable adverse water quality impacts downstream from watercourse stock crossings in the Tuolumne watershed (reference inserted, see notes). Since stock use impacts to water quality and sensitive wilderness resources are an issue of concern, the SFPUC has participated in funding numerous research studies aimed at developing a science-based management framework for wilderness stock use. We recommend the WSP adopt a rigorous management and monitoring framework for stock use that includes programmatic and sitespecific guidance related to the location, timing, and amount of stock use. The stock use management framework should include meadow opening and closing dates, and maximum numbers of stock at any one time and for the season.

We also recommend the park utilize the existing scientific research on this issue to develop an interim, pilot stock use management program for administrative stock use to be implemented during the development of the WSP. This pilot stock use program should designate appropriate stock use grazing and holding areas, and should include a monitoring program that evaluates the effectiveness of these management actions. NPS can monitor and refine the procedures during pilot program testing, and can adopt adaptive management triggers so that the program can also be refined after implementation based on the results of monitoring. This pilot stock use management program for administrative stock can be used to test and inform the development of a comprehensive stock use management program that also applies to private and commercial stock use. The insight gained from this pilot program will very likely provide important information to factor into the final decision-making for comprehensive stock use management--including administrative, commercial, and private stock use--in the final WSP.

Visitor Use and Capacity

The issue of visitor use and capacity is another important issue facing the Yosemite Wilderness, and the SFPUC is particularly interested in how this issue is managed in the Tuolumne River watershed. The SFPUC funds many NPS programs that specifically relate to visitor use and capacity, including wilderness patrols, interpretation, and wilderness visitor education. We strongly value these programs and commend the wilderness staff on their work to educate visitors about leave-no-trace and other principles to prevent visitor use impacts. We are concerned, however, that the existing wilderness permit system is not sufficient for managing impacts in certain high-use and sensitive areas. While we realize that the existing system of zone and trailhead quotas provides flexibility in "primitive and unconfined recreation," we believe the heavily used Yosemite wilderness--specifically the Tuolumne River watershed, the source of the drinking water supply for over 2.6 million people--requires an updated visitor use management system that is responsive to known and potential visitor use impacts. We recommend the WSP consider a trailhead and destination quota management to better control use in sensitive areas, especially in areas near the Tuolumne River and its tributaries (e.g., Lyell Canyon, the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne River, and Rancheria near Hetch Hetchy Reservoir).

We recommend ensuring the WSP has a robust and sustainable monitoring program, especially for water quality indicators, and that additional limitations on visitor use be considered in places where there is a known or likely water quality impact.

Potential Wilderness Additions

The NPS WSP scoping bulletin (11/15) states that the Purpose and Need includes: "the need to incorporate new policy direction and definitions for wilderness character into the park's wilderness management framework and to review the status of potential wilderness additions" (emphasis added). The City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) has fee simple ownership of several parcels within the boundaries of Yosemite National Park, and those parcels are also described as "potential wilderness additions" (PWAs) in the legal description of the Yosemite Wilderness. In the draft plan, please explain the framework that will be used in the planning process to review the status of PWAs, and please clearly explain how potential wilderness addition designation applies to parcels within YNP that are owned in fee by the CCSF (Lake Vernon, Miguel Meadows, Poopenaut Valley).

Other topics of concern/interest

The 1989 Wilderness Management Plan (WMP) Appendix A describes the YNP designated wilderness and potential wilderness addition boundaries. The

SFPUC recommends that along with the review of potential wilderness additions, that NPS also assess the potential of wilderness boundary line adjustments.

The SFPUC's highest potential water contaminate risk is the Tuolumne Meadows Waste Water Treatment Plant (TMWWTP) and collection system. The existing location of the TMWWTP--adjacent to the 100-year floodplain, separate from the treatment ponds and spray fields and connected by a sewage force main under the Tuolumne River--continues to be a water quality concern.

The Tuolumne River Plan (TRP) called for upgrading this facility to provide tertiary treatment and for "seeking technology to allow removal of the wastewater containment ponds and sprayfields." These facilities should be relocated (and co-located) to an area where there is minimum flooding potential and eliminates the need for a wastewater force main under the Tuolumne River and Tuolumne Meadows.

While participating in the TRP planning process, we were told that the wilderness boundary is a major constraint to identifying more resource appropriate sites for this wastewater treatment infrastructure. We respectfully request NPS consider adjusting the wilderness boundary in Tuolumne Meadows to exclude an area that would be appropriate to relocate the wastewater treatment plant, and co-locate with spray field and detention ponds. The boundary adjustment could result in no net-loss of wilderness, and provide a more appropriate relocation site for the TMWWTP that would better protect water quality.

Glen Aulin is the only High Sierra Camp within the Tuolumne Watershed, although trails to other camps are within the watershed. The SFPUC supports visitor use of this area that is compatible with protecting the Tuolumne River Wild and Scenic and Wilderness values, and implementation of the TRP management actions to protect and improve water quality at Glen Aulin.

The Lake Eleanor designated campground is no longer maintained with pit toilets as stated in the 1989 WMP. The current quota of overnight visitors is 10. The SFPUC recommends maintaining the quota of the designated camping area at a maximum of 10; if the quota is increased, install appropriate toilet facilities to ensure water quality remains protected from human waste impacts.

The 1989 WM Palso identified a goal to remove chemical toilets and replace them with appropriate facilities. The SFPUC recommends providing sit on top of the ground (Rom-Tech) or equivalent compost toilets for high use areas such as Lake Elizabeth, and Rancheria near Hetch Hetchy Reservoir. If adding this type of protective infrastructure to wilderness areas is unacceptable, then visitor use should be reduced to a level that is protective of water quality. A low destination quota for these specific locations may meet the need of protecting wilderness character and water quality.

The fire management section of the 1989 WMP appears to be outdated and potentially inconsistent with current YNP fire management policy. Please clarify the relationship between the YNP Fire Management Plan and the WSP. Current YNP wilderness regulations prohibit camping within 100 feet of a flowing stream, river, and any body of water. We ask the NPS to clarify this definition to include the area within the high water mark of any stream, river, or water body. This will remove the subjective nature of determining distance from a stream, as the actual campsite could change from high stream flow to low flow. Some streams are ephemeral in which case there would be no camping restriction when the stream was dry.

We also request that the word "stream" be clearly defined in the plan. The State of California defines a "watercourse" as any well-defined channel with distinguishable bed and bank showing evidence of having contained flowing water (14 CCR 895.1) and a "stream" as a natural watercourse as designated by a solid blue line or dash and three dots symbol shown on the largest scale united states Geological Survey map most recently published (PRC 4528 (f)).

Finally, please include a discussion of Memorandum of Agreement for Comprehensive Management of Watersheds Supplying the San Francisco Regional Water System within Yosemite National Park as part of the policy framework discussion in the WSP, so the public can be made aware of this agreement, and how the core and special programs funded by the MO A protect wilderness character and water quality.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these scoping comments. We look forward to continuing to work together to protect the Tuolumne River watershed and its wilderness values.

Correspondence ID:	727	Project:	47112	Document:	69178
Received:	Jan,29,2016 00:00:00				
Correspondence Type:	Letter				
Correspondence:	Dear Superintendent Neubacher,				

I am writing on behalf of the 11,000 member Pacific Crest Trail Association. The PCTA mission is to protect, preserve, and promote the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail as an internationally significant resource for the enjoyment of hikers and equestrians, and for the value that wild and scenic lands provide to all people. As the primary private partner in managing and maintaining the PCT, we are proud of our role in advocating for the PCT and the trail's users. Since 1993, our partnership with the federal agencies has been guided by an Memorandum of Understanding with the US Forest Service, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and California State Parks. One of the primary purposes of the MOU 'is to recognize the PCTA as the major partner in the planning, development, management, operation, and protection of the PCNST.' We have a keen interest in the Yosemite National Park Wilderness Stewardship planning process as there are approximately 67 miles of PCT within Yosemite National Park's designated Wilderness.

The scoping document identifies four management issues the Park will be confronted with in managing the Wilderness; Visitor Use and Capacity, Trail Management, Stock Use, and Commercial Services. I will address each issue below as they are all important issues that we deal with on the PCT and the 48 designated Wilderness areas through which it passes.

Visitor Use and Capacity- The PCT has been experiencing increased use in recent years. As such, we at PCTA have been working with our agency partners to address the issues associated with increased use. Through our various informational outlets, we have been communicating regularly with the PCT community about responsible backcountry travel and Leave No Trace Principles. We have also begun in discussions with local agency wilderness managers regarding particularly sensitive areas. The PCT user is a diverse set of individuals; day hikers, section hikers, thru-hikers, equestrians all spend time on the PCT. The great majority of individuals utilizing the PCT are traveling less than 500 miles during a single trip and are expected to secure the appropriate permits from the local land managers. However, those traveling greater than 500 miles are eligible to secure an inter-agency long-distance

permit from PCTA. It is a permit system that we are empowered to manage through the long standing MOU with our federal and state agency partners. It is important that the viability of the long-distance PCT permit remain intact to allow for the long-distance traveler to experience the trail for extended periods of time. The inter-agency permit system affords a hiker or equestrian the opportunity to focus on the journey rather than securing a separate permit at every administrative boundary.

Trail Management- PCTA prides itself in high quality trail work on the PCT and values our partnerships with the local land management agencies in accomplishing PCT maintenance projects. Between our professional staff and hundreds of volunteers along the PCT, we coordinated and supported more than 95,000 hours of volunteer labor in 2015. It is vital to the longevity of the trail that it is sustainably located and properly maintained, we strongly support the National Park Service in this endeavor. The 67 miles of PCT through Yosemite is an iconic section that should be maintained to the highest standards possible. And when appropriate, this may include management of high use overnight sites along the trail.

Stock Use- When the PCT was designated as one the nation's first National Scenic Trails by the National Trails System Act in 1968, one of the primary intended uses was as a trail that could be enjoyed by stock users common in the West. The PCT's long tradition as a stock trail remains a vital part of the experience, both in terms of the recreational trail user as well as the volunteer maintainer and packer. And, we certainly appreciate that Yosemite National Park trail crews rely on stock to support and supply backcountry projects. It is important that the opportunity for the private recreational stock user to experience Yosemite's backcountry via the PCT remain viable. The primary entry point for stock users to access the PCT within the Park boundary is at the Tuolumne Meadows trailhead. This would be an ideal location to provide stock trailer parking and interpretive information regarding the responsible use of stock on the PCT while exploring Yosemite's backcountry.

Commercial Use- While we support the agency's role and responsibility in managing commercial use, we feel that limiting group size within Yosemite's Wilderness and along the PCT is important to protect the trail's nature and purpose. And, it is important that commercial services along the PCT do not negatively affect the self-supported traditional user of the PCT. We also ask that the Park take under consideration the group size limits and commercial uses in the USFS Wilderness areas to the north and south of the Park's boundaries. We at PCTA strive for consistent management amongst agency partners along the PCT.

We at the PCTA look forward to working with Yosemite National Park as the planning process moves forward. With just over half of the PCT's length falling within federally designated Wilderness, we certainly understand and appreciate the importance of such a plan as it guides Wilderness stewardship into the future.

Sincerely,

Correspondence ID: 728 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,29,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Re: Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Dear Mr. Neubacher:

On behalf of the Mariposa Mountain Riders (MMR), an affiliate of the California State Horsemen's Association, Inc., I strongly suggest that you keep our trails open to equestrians' private usage and reinstate the commercial horseback rides within Yosemite National Park. We've only had positive experiences with tourists and hikers in Yosemite, and would like our right to ride in the Park to continue in addition to all those who enjoyed commercial riding in the past.

I've ridden my horses in Yosemite by myself, with friends, and with club members of Mariposa Mountain Riders and the Sierra Freepackers (Mid Valley Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC)) for close to 35 years. I've worked with numerous men and women to preserve the historic use of our State and Federal Park lands, and continuously endeavor to educate other club members and the general public on how to be "Gentle Users" of our trails.

It appears countless letters submitted to Park Service has left equestrians with only a further limit to pleasure riding and stock use in our parks. None of these restrictions are justified, as there are no explanations or scientific studies that show these restrictions are necessary.

I personally in addition to other aforementioned club members, are appalled at NPS's decision to eliminate the day rides in Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows. This eliminates the opportunity for the public to enjoy the Park via horseback. Having hiked in Yosemite, I can attest to the fact that experiencing the Park on horseback cannot be replicated by any other means. For the vast majority of visitors, that opportunity is provided to them through the services of commercial guides, and the public should be allowed to experience the Park in this special way.

The High Sierra Camps are another concern. There is no justification for the NPS to reduce their size and capacity as is being done at Merced Lake and Glen Aulin. These camps are historical. They are enclaves and are not part of the Wilderness in Yosemite. They should be retained and embraced as part of our heritage, and are beyond the scope of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

On behalf of MMR members, I appreciate your consideration in this matter, and hope your decisions will be based on scientific facts to prove that horseback riding and stock use in our parks is not detrimental, and that no further restrictions are made for equestrians to ride in our parks in the future.

Correspondence ID: 729 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,21,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form
Correspondence: 1. Public notice of upcoming "comment" opportunities (in person, webinars, and written) needs about a 3 month lead time before

closure date. Some people who prefer "in person" meets need time to plan around work! Thanks!

2. "In person" meetings should cover the state geography better. I suggest Sacramento, SF Bay Area, LA Basin or San Diego, and Yosemite (or central valley location like Stockton, Fresno, or Merced).
3. Suggest improvement for real-time collection of "wilderness permits" issued outside of Yosemite that cross into (or end up at) Yosemite Wilderness land.
4. This may already be addressed in the new "Merced River Plan" but if not I suggest placing "self mulching" latrines (like the one at Little Yosemite Valley) at each of the High Sierra Camps. (If not already done so...)
5. Consider additional parking zones for areas alongside Tenaya Lake (and anywhere else that highly impacts trailhead parking) . The "park anywhere you can squeeze into" current policy ruins many tree roots and branches and tears up blacktop. I realize this impacts parking for visitors who wish to dayhike (even backpack) so specific lots for hikers with permits (show tag on dash) might be added. (Something like the backpackers wilderness parking lot only "hidden" near upper pines campground- - or similar to the "sno park" pass required system used all over the sierras in winter?). I'm pretty sure that park management has considered these ideas but I'm suggesting that the WSP team consider them again.
6. Establish a long-range "data gathering plan" to begin quantifying which commercial services are necessary (and to what extent) in Yosemite's wilderness.

Thanks!

Correspondence ID: 730 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Dec.08,2015 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Transcript

Correspondence: Comments/Questions from public:

â€ How does the park work with other adjoining agencies when establishing permit quotas for wilderness?

â€ It would be ideal to have a uniform high sierra permit system that is standardized throughout all the FS districts and NPs.

â€ Get rid of the High Sierra Camps. If the NPS doesn't have the resources to regulate rules and regulations, then just get rid of them.

â€ People are unsure where the proper trails are, i.e. Rafferty boardwalk

â€ None of the High Sierra Camps should have flush toilets or septic systems, but rather a sophisticated, solar powered composting system.

â€ Use of Llamas over stock, mules.

â€ Require leave no trace training for all backcountry users, especially to try to mitigate traces of stock in wilderness.

â€ Fire rings are all over the place, "someone is breaking the rules by building new fire rings"

â€ Is there any way to notify rangers of illegal fire rings? Or potentially banning fires altogether?

â€ Backpackers should have to prove they have some experience before applying for permits (if it goes to a lottery?). Not fair for inexperienced backpackers to get the permits and the avid, experienced backpackers miss out. Require people to have WFR training or equivalent first aid training.

â€ Pack and stock animals should be required to wear poop bags to minimize waste on trail.

o Develop alternative trails for stock for the first ¼ mile, or assign someone in each pack string to kick the horse waste of the trail

â€ Is there any way to get rid of the Air Force fighter jets, commercial, and contrails?

â€ Cairns and rock art is out of control.

â€ Inyo computer system for permitting is a good example, easy to use.

â€ In developing a good quota system, need to be aware of commercial guides going in and reserving all the permits.

â€ Develop a waiting list system that would notify if a permit holder cancels. Something more convenient than checking every day to see if a permit becomes available.

â€ There is no incentive for permit holders to cancel.

â€ Bear canisters are working. Do not go down the SEKI path and install food lockers all over the wilderness.

â€ Will winter use be addressed in the WSP?

Correspondence ID: 731 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178

Received: Jan.20,2016 00:00:00

Correspondence Type: Transcript

Correspondence: 1. Sierra Club Fresno Chapter: The close of comment period is too close to the time of the last public meeting, this does not give much time to attend a meeting and then to gather comments from the chapter of the sierra club and get people to comment.

2. What is already in the works as far as the planning goes?

3. Is there going to be a more specific part of the plan that will analyze recreational use and its impact on special status or endangered species? (i.e. sierra Nevada red fox, red legged frog)

4. AMGA: Climbing guiding is limited in scope compared to other NPS units. We believe that guiding climbing is an appropriate use of wilderness. We believe that diversifying commercial

use and expanding guide opportunities can help with education and stewardship. Please consider this in the planning process of the WSP.

5. The roads are outside of the scope of the WSP, but the way people approach wilderness can affect wilderness use and management. The Tioga road goes through TM, and allows heavy access. I am concerned that there will be restrictions put in place to prevent heavy day use. Please minimize restrictions concerning these things, for example please do not require wilderness permits for going in to TM.

6. I have heard that this plan may include wilderness additions. I am interested in how these lands will be evaluated, because we have land inside that definition.

7. Access fund: visitor use and zoning for capacities: has this been considered.

8. What data do you have for visitor use and capacity? What data do you have based on the drought and climate change and its effect on change in visitor use? What data do you have on exactly who is out there and when?

9. I am concerned about day use hiking in wilderness areas. Parking on the roadside is a concern. Is there any way you can cross reference your permit use with the amount of overnight parking available. When we plan a trip there is not always a parking spot available.

10. Will the implementation of the TRP actions at Glen Aulin be part of the WSP?

11. In the MRP and TRP plans, parts of the rivers were newly opened to boats and recreational use. Are you set up with existing permits to capture river use on those parts of the river recently opened.

13. Is there anything that captures, like a permitting process, people that are hiking in from the outside of the park to inside the park?

14. How much will the eradication of fish be considered in the WSP, as well as fish stocking. Are we favoring one strain of genetic lineages over others? I would like to request genetic testing of fish before being eradicated.

15. Potential wilderness areas, are you going to target eliminating HSC's? What about the historical aspects that these camps provide in the wilderness? Why is commercialism a bad word? I am worried about the elimination of commercial services in the wilderness.

16. Is the GMP from 1980 still the controlling document for you, and how will it affect this plan? Is there any guideline about when the GMP will be reviewed?

17. Is there a paper trail we can follow, hard copies, some of us prefer that to computer screens. It would be nice to have hard copy tracking of these comments, for this plan.

18. Back country horseman: Why was there a reduction at Glen Aulin and Merced Lake in the River Plans? Please include an alternative in the plan to continue stock use in the park with no substantial reductions, and if there are then please have specific reasons listed as to why.

19. The tent frames of the tents removed at Merced Lake are being kept for historical interest. Why? I don't find that visually attractive. There are many groups that enjoy the hut to hut hiking experience, changing capacity at the HSC's could cause an issue with people making reservations.

20. Is there any way you can estimate when the future public meetings would occur to look at and discuss more specific planning and alternatives.

Correspondence ID: 732 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Feb,02,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form

Correspondence: I've been a long-time (1980-present) user of Ostrander Ski Hut, and I was very disturbed to be told that the Hut might no longer be open to the public after Nov. 2017. This is a unique resource in the park, which serves to introduce people to backcountry skiing. It pays its own way, as far as I'm aware. If concessioner-operated facilities like the High Sierra Camps are valuable, and I believe they are, then a lower-cost winter facility is even more valuable. Please renew Ostrander's operating agreement when it comes due. As the building is a historic structure, it can't be torn down in any case, and it would be a complete waste to not use it for its designed purpose, which has now continued for 75 years. Unlike such former park activities such as the firefall, or bear-feeding, human-powered recreation is to me entirely in keeping with the National Park Ethos.

Correspondence ID: 733 **Project:** 47112 **Document:** 69178
Received: Jan,27,2016 00:00:00
Correspondence Type: Park Form

Correspondence: Dear Superintendent Neubacher:
I urge you to continue operating Ostrander Ski Hut as a winter, backcountry, ski hut beyond 2017, when the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that governs hut operation expires. I first skied to the Hut about 30 years ago, when I was in my late 20's. In January, I made my most recent trip

and it was still a fantastic experience. Ostrander Hut adds to the diversity of your park by providing a unique opportunity for skiers and snowshoers, from young to old and from newbies to the experienced.
