US National Parks In Danger

Yosemite National Park was recently identified as one of America's ten most endangered parks by the Wilderness Society. In a report on the state of the national parks, the Society examined threats to many of the country's most precious natural areas and concluded that a variety of problems threatens the integrity of Yosemite and other reserves.

Key to the Yosemite designation were claims that the NPS has failed to adhere to the General Management Plan, that traffic congestion dogs the park and jeopardizes air quality and that logging just outside the boundaries of the park is adversely affecting wildlife habitat critical to park species.

Other parks on the ten most endangered list are Everglades, Glacier, Grand Canyon, Great Smokies, Yellowstone, Olympic, Rocky Mountain, Santa Monica Mountains and Manassas Battlefield. Several of these parks have been designated World Heritage Sites for their international significance.

The Wilderness Society cited the recent construction of a new Yosemite courthouse and jail as a violation of the goals of the 1981 master plan. That plan called for the removal of all administrative facilities from Yosemite Valley to improve the scenic quality and the natural landscape. The report commented: "recommendations ... in the park's master plan ... should be adhered to, or revised if necessary. Yosemite Valley contains a full-scale town, complete with a jail and a beauty parlor. Such a town does not belong in a park established to protect some of the nation's greatest natural wonders."

The report also makes reference to the continued inability of the NPS to handle mobile congestion, which has resulted in traffic jams on busy holidays and haphazard parking of vehicles in Yosemite Valley. "Many (visitors) come in cars and the results are air pollution and frequent gridlock. On one Memorial Day weekend, when more than...

Continued on page 8
Another Way Into the Backcountry

Mark Wellman

Yosemite's wilderness is not only a landscape, but a state of mind. Wilderness offers solitude, recreation, contemplation, and challenge. We are visitors in the wilderness, and we come away from it with respect and dignity, as well as with deeper insight into ourselves and nature.

Everyone, regardless of physical disabilities, deserves to experience Yosemite National Park's wilderness areas. When we discuss a disabled person, who are we talking about? The disabled, or "physically challenged" person, faces greater difficulty travelling than an able-bodied person. For the physically challenged, wilderness presents many obstacles. The terrain makes mobility slow and awkward. Wheelchairs and crutches (or whatever special adaptations are used), were not designed for the backcountry.

The physically challenged visitor may access the wilderness in at least two ways: 1) on his or her own strength, or, 2) by livestock. Special adaptations of the wheelchair, such as a rigid frame designed for stability and strength, are necessary in order to have good mobility using the first approach. Also, large pneumatic front wheels and off-road tires in the rear help traction for a smoother ride. Typical hospital-type wheelchairs will not work! Sport-type chairs are just as important in the backcountry as a good pair of hiking boots to the average hiker.

Stock use is not only historic, but still a big part of Yosemite's current backcountry use. The wilderness which comprises 89% of Yosemite National Park, includes 740 miles of trail on which stock is permitted. Stock use is the alternative method for the disabled to reach the backcountry.

Many adaptations may be necessary for the safety and health of the disabled rider. Padding the saddle relieves the rider from pressure sores that may develop over prolonged riding. Leg straps keep the lower body and legs secure in the stirrups. Wheelchairs and crutches need to "break down" easily with quick release hubs and foldable crutches. Braces on legs can assist the individual in getting on and off the stock, depending upon the disability.

When entering the backcountry, one's health and physical condition should be at its best. Mobility in the backcountry takes great strength, developing a proper diet and exercise program is important before embarking on a wilderness journey.

The privilege of backcountry use carries the same obligations for everyone. Permits are required before entering the wilderness. This system regulates usage and informs the visitor of backcountry rules.

For the physically challenged these rules are the same with two exceptions. Seeing-eye dogs for the sight impaired and signal-dogs for the hearing-impaired are permitted. Wheelchair users are allowed to use backcountry trails although these were not designed with proper grade, slope, width, or trail tread for the wheelchair user. If the wheeler has good upper body strength, some able-bodied assistance and a positive attitude, he or she can certainly enjoy the wilderness. With planning and conditioning, the physically challenged can experience Yosemite's backcountry.

First Member Work Trip a Big Success

The first of the new "member work trips" announced in the last issue of "Yosemite" has been completed and from all reports it was enormously successful and productive. Ten Y.A. members were housed at the Crane Flat facilities of the Yosemite Institute for a week during July. Each day a new work project was undertaken such as litter clean-up, river clean-up, and exotic vegetation eradication. The amount of work accomplished was tremendous.

The program is a cooperative one involving the National Park Service, the Yosemite Park & Curry Co, the Yosemite Institute, and YA. It is, reportedly, the first joint venture of its kind in the National Park system, and all parties involved hope to continue it in future years.

Thanks are due all those who helped make the first trip a success. Garrett DeBell of YP&CCo orchestrated the program, the Yosemite Institute provided instructors and other help, and the following YA members provided lots of hard work: Ron and Pat Bradley, Olga Morris, Barbara Allen, Don and Sue Armstrong, Fiona Humphrey, Carol and William Paratz, and Virginia Kammer. The Yosemite Park & Curry Co is to be commended for providing the funding for the program.
The Best Trail Ever Open in the Mountains

Fermin Salas

Hikers often overlook the craftsmanship and beauty of the trail they walk upon. Worse yet, many are unaware of the rich history beneath their feet. This, however, is a story of a trail that never was.

In October 1881, the Yosemite Valley Commissioners contracted with George Anderson to construct a trail on the north side of the Merced River beginning at Happy Isles to Albert Snow’s La Casa Nevada Hotel at the base of Nevada Fall. (According to some, Anderson intended to build his own hotel on the saddle of Half Dome and this would provide access). At first an ordinary saddle-trail was suggested, but Anderson was inspired by an ambition to make “the best trail ever open in the mountains.”

George Anderson was born in a small seaport town of Montrose on the east side of Scotland in 1839. Not much is known of his early life other than that he became a sailor. He had landed in the Yosemite area by 1867 as his name appears in the Great Register of Voters for Mariposa County. Anderson, then 28 years old, was living at Hite’s Cove on the South Fork of the Merced River. On October 12, 1875, Anderson made his mark on Yosemite history by being the first to climb Half Dome. (Geologist Josiah Whitney published in the 1869 edition of his Yosemite Guide-Book that Half Dome was “probably the only one of all prominent points about Yosemite which never has been, and never will be trodden by human foot.”)

Anderson’s Dream Trail

In 1882, with fifteen hundred dollars appropriated by the State of California, Anderson went to work. His trail would shorten the distance from Yosemite Valley to the base of Nevada Fall, avoid the laborious and difficult climb of thirteen hundred feet from Register Rock to the Vernal Fall summit, bypass the peril of over two hundred feet of ladders at Fern Grotto, and would offer an “easy walk and delightful walk even for ladies to the foot of Nevada Fall.” It was also thought at the time that the trail could be widened into a carriage road.

George Anderson’s trail was built in the same style as this stretch of the zig-zags to Nevada Falls above Snow’s Nevada Hotel (below), the intended destination of Anderson’s trail.

Anderson reached Grizzly Peak. Another equal amount, which also proved insufficient, was voted so he could finish the trail. George Anderson had completed all but “three hundred feet” of the trail to the top of Vernal Fall when he encountered unseizable joints called “slips” in the granite. He figured he would cut into the face of the cliff, but the “slips” were wrong and the more he blasted the less rock he had to work with. At this point, another idea was developed: a tunnel could be drilled straight ahead until it reached solid rock and then swing around back toward the top of Vernal Fall. A great plan, but it lacked one key ingredient. The money to complete the gap.

At that point, George Anderson had spent three thousand dollars of the State’s money, and most of his own. The State decided to stop the work, yet someone ordered him to start again, possibly Dr. Briggs, one of the Commissioners. Anderson was never paid for this later work. With only a three hundred foot gap remaining to the top of Vernal Fall, Anderson ran out of money and energy. He abandoned his dream of building “the best trail ever open in the mountains.”

In the spring of 1884, while painting Sinning’s cottage in Yosemite Valley, Anderson contracted pneumonia, and died May 8 at photographer George Fiske’s home. He is buried in the Yosemite cemetery.

Evidence of George Anderson’s carriage trail can still be seen on the Vernal Fall trail about two-thirds of the way to the Vernal Fall bridge. Extensive rock work cuts back sharply to the left from the main trail. —Editor.

Fermin Salas

is a field interpreter in the Yosemite Valley District of the park.
Coyote’s Comfort

Kelly Wolcott

"Thou seest no beauty save thou make it first.
Man, Woman, Nature each is but a glass
Where the soul sees the image of herself.
Visible echoes, offerings of herself.


Chilly winds blew over Lake Tenaya as Old Man Coyote scratched the hard, barren ground of the campsite. He walked a full dog’s circle around the scratched earth, stretched and curled up onto his chosen spot.

Coyote had never felt such an ache! He stood up, walked another full circle and laboriously pawed the hard dirt.

“Never had old-man Coyote felt so much softness! He walked his full circle, sniffing at the large pad laden with cloths and covers. A few scratches properly fluffed up the flat bedding and Coyote settled his bony haunches down.

“Now I’m home, everyone would know that Coyote was the most powerful and successful animal anywhere.”

Coyote looked at the hogan and thought to himself, “How clever I am to find this comfortable den! I can enjoy the pleasures of the wilderness without sweating, getting dirty or getting cold.”

The 40-foot Beaver lurched from its berth and twisted down the lane into the street beyond. Coyote stayed at the wheel, peering between his bushy eyebrows as he pushed a Toyota down the narrow road.

Coyote snuck back to the first motor home and crawled into the driver’s seat. "So how do I get this thing started?" he wondered out loud. He looked at the keys in the ignition. “Must have something to do with these things,” he thought, “these two-leggeds are always locking up something or other.”

Turning the keys, Coyote heard the roar of the great diesel engine in the back as it ignited. He leapt full into the seat and took the wheel in his hands. Throwing every switch he could find and turning every button, he finally threw the motor home in gear at the same time he floored the gas pedal.

The great moving hogan of the two-legged white man stood in the clearing, silver chrome bands reflecting the reds of firelight. Spread before the too-large fire, a rotund human sat mesmerized by a glowing box tethered on a long cord snaking from the open door of the metal home. Coyote crept behind the man and looked inside the hogan.

“There's always something tasty lying around one of these,” he thought to himself.

Inside, he crept to the back, slightly raising his nose to sniff while keeping one eye on the door. At the very back of the long hogan he found a square pad. Sniffing some bit of chocolate on the other side, he trotted across the pad.

Never had old-man Coyote felt such softness! He walked his full circle, sniffing at the large pad laden with clothes and covers. A few scratches properly fluffed up the flat bedding and Coyote settled his bony haunches down.

"This is it," Coyote thought, "this is the best sleeping den I have ever seen or felt! Wouldn’t Bear be jealous! Wouldn’t Porcupine lose his quills from envy? Why, if I had this hogan, everyone would know that Coyote was the most powerful and successful animal anywhere.”

Coyote looked at the luxury about him and swore he'd live his long life surrounded by this warmth and softness. He quietly crept out the door and trotted down to the river’s edge. Quietly gathering sticks, mud, bottle caps, small bits of broken glass and other trash, he fashioned a crude 50-foot motor home. Being larger than any other Coyote had ever seen, he knew his hogan of mud and sticks would attract the envious eyes of the human sitting in front of the glowing box. Then Coyote disguised himself in just the right set of flowered shirt and shorts to lure the tourist to the water’s edge.

Every motor home owner came running to inspect the magnificent machine. Everyone was excited to see Coyote’s false motor home and everyone worried that his or her own might be too small. Coyote heard people murmur “I sure hope the wife doesn’t see this! She'll never be satisfied with mine anymore!” or “God, will you look at the size of that thing! Imagine what you could do with it!”

While the tourists squinted in the dim light for the mud and trash mobile home’s brand, Coyote snuck back to the first motor home and crawled into the driver’s seat. "So how do I get this thing started?" he wondered out loud. He looked at the keys in the ignition. “Must have something to do with these things,” he thought, “there are always two-leggeds hanging around something or other.”

Coyote held court from his new home. He invited all the animals to see his new opulence, his new sleeping den and the array of modern conveniences he was learning to command. Coyote even tried to convince Badger-Woman and Fox-woman to stay the right, but they declined.

Coyote’s nights blended into days and his time became one long series of entertainments and joys. Every day he would go to the window of his metal hogan and look at the cliffs beyond. He sighed and thought to himself, “How clever I am to find this comfortable den! I can enjoy the pleasures of the wilderness without sweating, getting dirty or getting cold.”
Close Yosemite to Californians?

Coyote ate the food left in the cupboards of the metal hogan. He learned to open cans, boil water to make soup, turn on the generator to brighten the lights and use the microwave to heat his food. He began to grow lazy and soon didn’t even look out his window, closing his curtains to the passing days and wise face of the traveling moon.

One morning Coyote woke up to find ice crystals lining the metal edges of his hogan. He hadn’t noticed the cold evening while burrowed under the covers of his bed. Thinking back, he remembered that many of the other animals hadn’t visited him in quite a while. In fact, he hadn’t even gone outside for weeks now.

He rose from his bed, stretched and walked to the door. Opening the door, Coyote saw the peaks of Pywiack covered in white, cold snow. While the tall lodgepole pines were cold-dusted and still, Coyote felt a freezing wind blow in through his open door.

“How’d it snow?” Coyote demanded. The wind swept softly between the frozen domes, not answering. He looked at the full face of the afternoon moon.

So late in the year, Coyote would have a difficult time finding food and making his way through the snow to the lower altitudes. Turning his back on the wilderness in the warmth and comfort of his metal hogan, Coyote had lost track of the turning seasons. He had tried to live in the wilderness as if it were a clever picture painted on the window of his hogan.

After moving into the metal den, Coyote had declared his independence from the rough wildness of nature. He sought Nature’s beauty without suffering its misery, and lost his sense of struggle. Yet without struggle, nature loses its beauty and becomes another contrivance of man. Nature may be hidden, sometimes overcome and occasionally tamed, but it may never be extinguished.

National Park Service Director
William Penn Mott recently caused a stir when during an interview he off-handedly suggested that Yosemite should be closed to Californians on selected days to allow non-state residents to visit. Mott’s exact statement was: “We have to consider that on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, the park will not be available to people in California. When that will happen, I don’t know.”

The controversy that followed was not surprising. Several newspapers carried the story complete with descriptions of the proposal as “ludicrous” and “illegal as well as absurd.” NPS officials were quick to point out that Mott was simply “thinking out loud” and that he had been quoted out of context.

Whatever the case, several weeks later Mott clarified his earlier statements by saying that: “the time is coming when people from other states are going to go to their senators and ask them to do something about letting them get into Yosemite, too. Maybe on Mondays or Saturdays, Californians couldn’t go into the park. Or there could be some kind of quota on California visitors.” He added: “I don’t know when that will happen. It could be five, 15 or 25 years away.”

Concerned Californians were relieved when George Berkady, a NPS spokesman, announced that the Park Service has no plans to restrict entrance of Californians to Yosemite. “If we did, Superintendent Morehead would need a whole cadre of sumo wrestlers at the entrance stations to handle all the upset visitors,” continued Berkady, somewhat amendedly. He further acknowledged that no studies of the issue were under way or proposed and that such restrictions might pose both practical and legal questions.

There is no question, however, that increasing visitation at Yosemite and other national parks has created problems with which the NPS must continually grapple. Overcrowded accommodations, traffic congestion and air pollution have all resulted from the ever-growing influx of park visitors.

Is it possible that before too long ranges will be checking the geographic origins of visitors and turning away Californians on certain days of the week?

Californians’ proposal may have been ill-advised, giving long-range thought to the problem of overuse is not. Among Mott’s other ideas for controlling visitation are persuading Americans to use less-popular and less-populated parks, and expanding existing parks and creating new ones.

While restrictions on Californians’ gates are not immediately to be imposed, perhaps other visitor limits and controls, not based on residency, can be implemented.

To support such controls, park officials must do a better job of assessing visitor impact and determining the appropriate level of use. Given our country’s growing population and the mounting demand for outdoor recreation, parks like Yosemite cannot withstand the continually growing pressure of unrestricted visitation indefinitely.
A Modest Proposal

I enjoyed Park Bonaventura’s “Slowly Die the Embers” in the Winter 1988 issue of Yosemite. It refreshed in my mind the Firefall’s history and brought back fond memories of the many enjoyable times spent viewing this historical tradition. Its demise was with disappointment, but understanding.

However, there is a more serious and dangerous matter that plagues Yosemite Valley that I would like to see ended. The Firefall met its demise in favor of the environment. I'd like to propose that Valley mountain climbing meet its demise in favor of the thousands of visitors who come to see the Valley's grandeur without the circus distractions of rock climbers, the anxiety of their potential falling, and the terrible witnessing of some of them falling to their deaths.

Mountain climbing has no place in Yosemite Valley. Corpses hanging on El Capitan and traffic snarled by rubber neckers hoping to see someone fall are foreign elements that should not pollute the Valley's towering beauty.

Please help us rid our Valley of this blood and guts sport. Encourage your readers to write the National Park Service Director, William Penn Mott, Jr. (Department of the Interior, Washington DC 20240); the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, Donald Paul Hodel (Washington DC 20240); President Ronald W. Reagan (1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington DC 20240); President Ronald W. Reagan (1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington DC 20240); and their federal legislators to take action to remove climbers from the Valley walls.

J. Carlyle Parker
Tullock

Little Commitment to the GMP

In 1980, when the Plan finally was approved, it represented the hopes and expectations of the thousands of people who participated in the planning process. No plan ever before published by government was reflective of such a strong public voice.

There is nothing ill-conceived about the GMP recommendations. What has been ill-conceived is a commitment to implement the Plan.

The appointment of James Watt as Secretary of the Interior did nothing to help with commitment to the then newly approved Plan. In subsequent years, the park staff has had to struggle just to deal with failing utility systems, deteriorating roads, and increasing congestion.

Still, the basic underlying message in the Plan is valid. The message is that in Yosemite, one of the greatest of all national parks, this generation should find the means, the courage, and the money to undo intrusive development which no longer is essential to public enjoyment of the park.

We can debate “essential,” but let us not write off a well conceived General Management Plan in the absence of that debate.

I have read that each of the new Stealth Bombers will cost $450,000,000. Oh, for the price of one bomber, or even a wing or cockpit, as an investment in the natural splendor of Yosemite. Then the Plan will be alive and dust free.

We must make this investment. We must keep faith with those who have cared for the park in past decades, and, more importantly, those who will inherit the product of our care.

Bob Binnewies
Mariposa
Mr. Binnewies is a former Superintendent of Yosemite National Park.

Sixty Miles in Six Days

I recently completed the Yosemite Association’s Trans Sierra Ski Trip. It was a most rewarding experience. The trip was well planned and executed. From the initial meeting to the logistics of van and airplane travel through the day-to-day adventure of skiing 60 miles in six days with eight friends, the trip proceeded smoothly.

I was favorably impressed with the leadership of Tory Finley and Janet Hardy. They are amazing: thoughtful, knowledgeable, sensitive, capable decision-makers, upbeat, hard working and more.

For so long I’ve wanted to do a Trans Sierra Ski Trip. Thanks for helping make it an accomplishment.

Santa Barbara
W.M. Peffley

To all National Park Cooperating Associations

Last week I was presented with the consolidated Annual Report of the National Park cooperating associations. Your many accomplishments of last year and your goals for this year are impressive. I want to take this opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate all of your support and dedication. A 12 percent increase in sales and a 29 percent increase in Aid to the National Park Service is fantastic. Even more important are the services that you have provided to millions of visitors to your national park sites. By offering quality publications, informational materials and personal services, you have greatly enhanced the visitors’ experience, and you should be very proud of the positive influence that you have had.

Keep up the good work, and thank you for a “Job Well Done!”

William Penn Mott
Director, US National Park Service
Members’ Meeting
Taking Shape

It's almost time once again for the Yosemite Association’s Annual Members’ Meeting. Scheduled for Wawona on September 10 and 11, this will be the Association's thirteenth annual meeting. We are pleased to announce that Patricia Schifferle, the Wilderness Society’s Regional Director for California and Nevada, has agreed to be our guest speaker. Her address will concern the Wilderness Society’s recent report on the state of U.S. National Parks including Yosemite.

Registration for the meeting will begin on Saturday at 11:30 am in front of the Thomas Hill Studio at the Wawona Hotel and continue through 1:00 pm. The Thomas Hill Studio will serve as Y.A. headquarters throughout the weekend. At noon, cheese and crackers will be served at The Pioneer History Center where the business meeting will begin at 1:00 pm. Following the meeting (about 4:00 pm), a wine reception and raffle will be held, and at 5:00 pm a barbecue dinner is scheduled on the lawn of the Wawona Hotel.

Programs for the weekend will be available at registration and at the Wawona Hotel front desk. Be sure to bring your own lawn chairs or blankets for the business meeting as there are no chairs or benches. On Sunday, a schedule of interpretive walks and other programs is planned.

At the meeting members may nominate by petition candidates for the three board seats to be filled by election this fall. Petitions will be available at the registration area, and must be signed by 25 or more current members in attendance at the meeting. For petitions to be valid, they must be filed with the Chairman or the President by 5:00 pm on September 10.

For the meeting we have set aside a number of rooms at the Wawona Hotel. To insure fairness in the process of allotting these rooms, we conducted a lottery for interested members. Results of the lottery were to be mailed on August 12. If you would like information regarding alternative accommodations in the Wawona area, please call our office.

Those members who are without housing are encouraged to attend the meeting anyway. Besides the usual business meeting, walks and talks, raffle and other events, we will enjoy a western-style steak barbecue on the grounds of the Wawona Hotel. To insure your place at dinner on Saturday, please send a check made payable to the Yosemite Association for $12.00 per adult and $7.50 per child, 9 years or younger. Mail it to Members’ Meeting, PO Box 250, El Portal, CA 95318.

Meeting Schedule
Saturday, September 10
11:30 am Registration at Thomas Hill Studio, Wawona Hotel
12:00 noon Cheese and crackers at The Pioneer History Center
1:00 pm Members’ Meeting at The Pioneer History Center
4:00 pm Wine Reception and raffle at The Pioneer History Center
5:00 pm Barbecue dinner on the lawn of the Wawona Hotel
8:00 pm Old-Time Barn Dance in the gray barn adjacent to the History Center

Sunday, September 11
A schedule of interpretive walks, programs and other activities. Details to be available at time of meeting.

Membership Booth in the Valley

Holly Warner

This summer a group of highly dedicated Yosemite Association members is staffing a new membership recruitment booth in Yosemite Valley. The wooden booth, located in the shade between the Visitors Center and the Ansel Adams Gallery, serves many functions.

While informing visitors about the Association and encouraging them to become members is the primary job of the volunteers, they find themselves involved in handing all sorts of inquiries ranging from directions to the nearest bathroom to routes into the most remote areas of the backcountry!

Some questions are easily answered, and in other cases visitors are directed to the appropriate place for additional information. Either way, there is a lot of public contact. As of mid-July, the volunteers had recruited more than 50 new YA members (including 2 life members) and assisted scores of present members in a variety of ways.

The Valley membership booth allows the Association a more visible presence with the summer visiting public, thanks entirely to these cheerful, well-informed volunteers.

In addition to gaining new members and taking a bit of the heat off the mid-summer crunch at the Visitors Center, the volunteers are staffing the new Museum Exhibit Gallery. This is a boon to the National Park Service, freeing up NPS employees for other pressing assignments and keeping the gallery open to the public every day of the week.

The summer exhibit in the gallery is “Early Yosemite Photography” — photographs made from rare glass plate negatives. The new gallery will allow thousands of visitors to see parts of the Park's extensive Museum collection in rotating exhibits.

Most of this summer’s group of enthusiastic volunteers are old hands, having worked in the past at the Yosemite Fund kiosk. Dorothy Kirkpatrick has returned for her fourth summer in the Park, and Ethel and Eston Davis and Sally Murray are all in their third year. Marjorie Brooks, Denise Gedrimas, Kathleen Orr, Joyce Hailey, and Oscar Whittington are back for the second time, and Jean Thompson is new this year.

The volunteers have a schedule which combines work and play with four days on, then three days off to hike and explore. While it's clear these people love their time in the Park, the Yosemite Association is deeply grateful to them for all their good work. If you are in the Valley this summer or fall, be sure to stop by and say hello!
If outstanding scenic beauty and wilderness values are degraded, the reasons for designating Yosemite as a national park will be invalidated.

Continued from page 1

20,000 cars entered the park, there was a four-hour traffic jam and an ambulance was forced onto a bicycle path to get by.

The Park Service has worked to reduce traffic in Yosemite Valley, but the sheer volume of cars often offsets increased shuttle bus availability and the park’s “park and ride” thrust. Complicating the problem is that pursuant to the Master Plan, a number of parking spaces have been eliminated from Yosemite Valley. Related restrictions of automobiles have not been imposed, although a traffic flow program has been developed for peak weekends.

Logging activities outside the boundaries of the park have long concerned park managers. Great numbers of animal species regularly move between forest and park areas oblivious to the arbitrary boundaries imposed by the US Government. In the Stanislaus National Forest, increases in the level of logging activity have been noted by the NPS which has regularly commented on timber forest plans.

Unfortunately, the comments of park representatives are not always heeded, and logging on private lands near the park is regulated by the California Department of Forestry. The concept of national parks as islands has been shown to be invalid, and extensive disturbance of habitat near Yosemite could have devastating effects on park wildlife.

The Wilderness Society addressed this problem with the following recommendation: “Because so many of the national parks are bordered by national forests and other lands managed by the federal government, it should be possible to adopt sound ecosystem management practices that reflect the interdependence of the areas. Straight lines on a map mean little to wildlife, streams and other components of a natural system. But too often decisions made on Bureau of Land Management or national forests are at odds with the goals of the nation’s parks.”

Other threats to Yosemite noted in the report include sightseeing aircraft overflights and construction of second homes at the periphery of the park. While overflights and resultant air pollution were identified by the Wilderness Society as threats to Yosemite, below: the peaceful landscape of Yosemite’s Tenaya Lake.

Traffic congestion and resultant air pollution were identified by the Wilderness Society as threats to Yosemite.
A unanimous feeling that the national parks are endangered, underfunded and maintained deficiently.

The $1.9 Billion Deficiencies

Underlining the Society’s findings is a recent report of the US General Accounting Office which detailed a list of deficiencies at Yosemite based on operational and maintenance problems affecting practically every aspect of the park. It is estimated that the deficiencies alone would cost $76 million to remedy. The same report concludes that a total of $1.9 billion is needed for repairs, construction and trail rebuilding at the nation’s parks, recreation areas, national monuments and other federal scenic areas.

Representatives of the Wilderness Society contend that many of the threats identified in their report were pointed out in the early 1980’s by a federal study, but the Reagan administration has ignored the problems. The report also criticized the administration’s refusal to use monies from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to acquire new parkland.

Apparently, the National Park Service does not quibble with the findings of the Wilderness Society. In an address to a conference of park Superintendents recently, NPS Director William Penn Mott characterized the state of the parks as “deplorable.” Mott cited a number of threats including development, timber-cutting, and oil and gas exploration, and made reference to serious maintenance deficiencies.

In urging the superintendents to strive to protect their respective park areas, the Director used such descriptions as “desperate needs,” “deplorable state” and “shameful” when referring to the NPS system.

Depoliticize the NPS

Following Mott’s speech, Representative Bruce Vento of Minnesota supported the Director’s points and charged the Reagan administration with politicizing park policy. He warned that the “crown jewels” of the park system should not be turned into rhinestones.

Vento has sponsored a bill that would create an autonomous Park Service, taking it from under the wing of the Interior Department with the goal of depoliticizing the agency. He also hopes that the NPS budget which has declined by $275 million since 1980 will receive a higher priority from Congress under his proposed scheme.

With such a unanimous feeling that the national parks are endangered, underfunded and maintained deficiently, perhaps greater funding emphasis will be given to them under the next administration. In Yosemite, the review and revision of the General Management Plan proposed by Superintendent Morehead should be undertaken soon. As well, the question of controlling traffic congestion in Yosemite Valley should be addressed seriously and as expeditiously as possible. Lastly, ways to coordinate management of federal lands in and around Yosemite should be explored before further harm to park wildlife occurs.

The unique resources which prompted establishment of Yosemite National Park are imminently threatened, and their maintenance is inadequate; a continuing pattern of underfunding and overseuse could lead to disturbing consequences. If outstanding scenic beauty and wilderness values are degraded, the reasons for designating Yosemite as a national park will be invalidated and visitor experiences will suffer. That prospect is unacceptable.
Endangered Yosemite

Garren De Bell

The Wilderness Society recently declared Yosemite endangered. Their primary concern, external threats to Yosemite, not park facilities as widely reported by the media, is real and deserves study followed by effective action.

Logging and second home development on the park periphery could prove seriously damaging to critical wildlife habitat. Air pollution from external sources, particularly expanding industry needs to be scrutinized.

Many readers may not be aware of all that has already been done to address the issues raised by The Wilderness Society.

Air pollution

Stationary sources in Yosemite, such as boilers in Curry Company's hotels have been evaluated and found to average approximately 100 times cleaner than the already strict regulations require. The few older and dirtier boilers have been replaced with clean burning units.

The well known shuttle system has recently been expanded to include a shuttle from Wawona to the Big Trees, the newest addition to the system. Each passenger who rides the shuttle aids the cause of clean air.

The bike path system in Yosemite Valley now allows easy use of bicycles, the least polluting and most healthful alternative to the private car throughout the East end of the Valley.

The newest initiative, recently announced by Yosemite Superintendent Jack Morehead, is a plan to reduce the smoke from campfires, ironically the major source of visual air pollution in the Valley. The plan will prohibit the gathering of firewood beginning next year. It is hoped that this will eliminate the burning of green and wet wood and thus significantly reduce the amount of smoke contributed by campfires.

Congestion

The shuttle bus system and bike path system are the most well known measures aimed at congestion. Additionally a new campground reservations system has substantially reduced congestion in the East end of Yosemite Valley. Prior to the development of the system campers would drive to Yosemite and line up during the early morning hours hoping to find a campsite. Not only...
I heartily concur that our mountain goat population (of 1000) is a major Olympic Park threat..."
Bob Chandler, Superintendent

For those few days when congestion becomes excessive, a new traffic management plan goes into effect. The NPS sets a limit on the number of cars that can enter the East end of Yosemite Valley. When the number is exceeded, those without confirmed overnight reservations are advised to visit other areas of the 1200 square mile park until the Valley has available space. While this system is used very infrequently, it is an important weapon in the arsenal against congestion.

Scenic Overflights

The threat of frequent scenic overflights has dramatically lessened thanks to recent legislation passed by Congress. The law, introduced by Congressman Tony Coelho, keeps flights 2000' above the rim of the Valley. Curry Company worked for legislation prohibiting scenic overflights for many years and refused to cooperate with overflight operators who wanted to market their flights through Curry Company facilities.

These are just a few of the many efforts that have successfully reduced environmental impacts in Yosemite. Many other improvements will be made through the efforts of The National Park Service, The Yosemite Fund, The Yosemite Association, The Yosemite Institute, The Yosemite Park and Curry Company, The Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society and other Friends of Yosemite.

Garrett De Bell, a life member of the Yosemite Association, is an ecologist who serves as environmental consultant to The Yosemite Park and Curry Company.

New Yosemite Stamp a Hit

The new "Flag Over Yosemite" postage stamp was officially released May 20, and judging from the reaction of park visitors and stamp collectors, it's a popular item. Postal officials estimated that up to 250,000 of the stamps were cancelled on the first day of issue.

The new stamp was welcomed into existence by a special ceremony in front of the Yosemite Valley Post Office attended by politicians, park personnel, and hundreds of stamp enthusiasts and visitors. The list of speakers failed to daunt the stamp-hungry collectors who bought the Yosemite issue in large quantities.

The Yosemite flag stamp was released to pay tribute to the natural beauty of Yosemite which symbolizes our nation's heritage of wilderness and freedom. The Postal Service has printed 2.2 billion copies of the stamp, and they are likely to stay in use for as long as 25 cent postage stamps are around.

A unique feature of the stamp is that it was not issued in sheets as many other commemoratives are. The flag stamp is available only in "coils". But collectors disappointed by that fact should be happy that the stamp even exists at all. The post office receives 14,000 requests for special issue stamps each year, and of those only 20 end up as stamps. The Yosemite stamp survived some remarkable odds.

Some collectors made creative uses of the flag stamp. Not only did they obtain 1st day cancellations at Yosemite, but they arranged to have the stamps cancelled at related locations. For example, several of the stamps were taken to the Ahwahnee, California post office for that special tie.

For those unable to come to Yosemite for the first day issue celebration, the Yosemite Park & Curry Co. developed a handsome commemorative envelope upon which is affixed the cancelled "Flag Over Yosemite" stamp (see illustration). The envelope with cachet is available from the Yosemite Association for $1.75. If you would like to purchase one or more by mail, please use the order form on page 14 of this issue.
Books of Interest

A selection of new noteworthy books that illustrate the wide and varied scope of Yosemite and the High Sierra region, as well as the national parks generally. Each title can be purchased from the Association at any Visitor Center or park bookstore, or by mail order using the order form on page 14 of this issue. Members of the Association are entitled to a 15% discount off retail prices.

**John Muir in His Own Words**
*(A Book of Quotations)*
Peter Browning
#11870 (paper) $9.95.
Mr. Browning has compiled and edited a long-needed collection of John Muir quotations which features an excellent subject index. The index makes it easy to find the exact text of familiar quotations, and allows the reader to discover new excerpts using a chosen topic. Interestingly, the quotations have been arranged chronologically by date written (rather than by date published). Reading the book straight through, then, reveals Muir's changing style and content over the years. Painstaking bibliographic references make this an invaluable addition to one's Muir library.

**Yellowstone to Yosemite**
*(Early Adventures in the Mountain West)*
Lito Tejada-Flores, ed.
#18550 (paper) $12.95.
This publication consists of fascinating excerpts from the 19th century work entitled "Picturesque America." Focusing on the western chapters of that earlier volume, the book is divided into five sections. Recorded are early travel adventures along the Yellowstone, among the Rocky Mountains, down the canyons of the Colorado and Green Rivers, in the high country of Utah and the Sierra Nevada, and into Yosemite Valley. Published in an over-sized format, with illustrations by Thomas Moran.

**Birds of Yosemite and the East Slope**
David Gaines
#6325 (paper) $16.50.
Completed and published just prior to his untimely death, this exhaustive treatment of Yosemite birds is a testament to the knowledge and sensitivity of David Gaines. A total reworking and expansion of his earlier work, "Birds of the Yosemite Sierra," the book details the distribution, status, abundance and habitat of every species known to occur in the Yosemite and Mono Lake regions of California's Sierra Nevada. Illustrated by Keith Hansen, this is a must for fans of Yosemite birds and David Gaines.

**Cyclists' Route Atlas**
*A Guide to the Gold Country & High Sierra/South*
Randall Gray Braun
#9250 (paper) $8.95.
This thorough atlas will direct bicyclists to 28 spectacular and varied routes through rolling Sierra foothills, the historic gold country, into the majesty of Yosemite National Park, and onto the high desert of the Mono Lake region. No matter what your ability or interest, this guide will allow you to explore the diverse Yosemite region with confidence on your bicycle.

**Guide to the Theodore Solomons Trail**
Dennis Gagnon
#11390 (paper) $9.95.
An alternative route to the heavily used John Muir Trail between Yosemite and Mt. Whitney, the Theodore Solomons Trail is a lower elevation route that passes through some of the finest country in the Sierra Nevada. This authoritative guide describes the trail, recommends twenty other backcountry trips (from day hikes to long backpacks), and comes complete with maps, directions to roadheads, and addresses for Forest and Park Service permit offices.

**Southern Yosemite Rock Climbs**
Mark and Shirley Spencer
#16385 (paper) $15.95.
Intended for technical rock climbers, this guidebook treats a variety of climbing routes on the west slope of the Southern Sierra. Coverage includes southern Yosemite and the Sierra National Forest. Complete maps and charts are featured along with indexes of climbs by grade and first ascents. With chapters on the Mount Starr King and Wawona regions, this is a valuable addition to the literature of Yosemite climbing.
Yosemite Place Names by Peter Browning. This new book explains how the names of Yosemite came to be and includes the record of who named what when. Many peculiar and humorous anecdotes have been collected in this comprehensive volume. Great West Books, 1988. #19850 (paper). $12.95.

Yosemite — A Reader's Digest Video. This new video tape allows the viewer to experience the spectacular beauty and eternal grandeur of Yosemite National Park from the most scenic vantage points. The full-color production utilizes specially scored stereo music and enlightening narration. Running time: 55 minutes. #4594 (VHS only). $24.95.

Yosemite 1989 Calendar. Produced by the Dream Garden Press, the Yosemite calendar has become a favorite of Y.A. members. With 14 colorful photographs in a 10” x 13” format, and interesting Yosemite vignettes for each month. It’s not too early to buy your 1989 calendar now. #4181. $8.95.

Yosemite Note Cards. This set of eight full-color note cards has just been published by the Yosemite Association. Featuring distinctive photographs of Yosemite by William Neill, the cards come boxed with white envelopes. #1440. $6.75.

Indians of the Yosemite Valley and Vicinity by Galen Clark. Originally published in 1907, this is a reprint of a classic Yosemite work by one of the park's most colorful residents. Includes illustrations by Chris Jorgensen and numerous photographs. Diablo Books, 1987. #11580 (paper). $8.95.

Yosemite Wildflower Trails by Dana C. Morgenson. This layman's guidebook to the colorful world of Yosemite's flowering plants has been out of print for some time now and was just reprinted by the Association. With some 400 species included and 125 color illustrations, this guide to the flowers along the roads and trails of Yosemite is both handy and informative. #925 $6.95.
Yosemite Association Cap. Complete your outdoor wardrobe with this trendy item from the Association collection! It’s the perfect hat for a hot, sunny day in the great outdoors—mesh fabric to keep a cool head, a generous bill to shade your face, and adjustable strap in the back to insure a good fit for everyone. All of this plus the Yosemite Association patch to let everyone know what your favorite organization is! Brown with white accent. #1600, $6.00.

Yosemite Association Mug. This distinctive and functional white ceramic mug has our logo and name imprinted in brown. Holds eight ounces of your favorite beverage. #1625, $3.00.

Ostrander Lake T-shirts. Become affiliated with an elite Yosemite ski club with one of our fashionable "Ostrander Lake Ski Club" t-shirts. Available in both long-sleeve (light blue) and short-sleeve (white) models, the Ostrander shirts are heavyweight 100% cotton printed in four colors. Short-sleeve (S,M,L,XL), $10.50; #1670 Long-sleeve (S,M,L,XL), $15.00; #1674

Pelican Pouch, Wilderness Belt Bag. The Pelican Pouch is not only perfect for carrying field guides, but also offers instant access to all the small items that are usually buried in your pack—pocket camera, lenses, maps, or your favorite trail mix! The Pouch is designed with front snap fasteners on the straps. This allows comfortable positioning on your belt—even between belt loops; no need to take your belt off first. The material is high quality Cordura pack cloth with a waterproof coating on one side. Beige with the dark brown and white Yosemite Association patch, the Pelican Pouch measures 8 x 5 x 2½ inches. #1690, $11.95.

Yosemite Enamel Pin. Designed especially for the Association, our enamled metal pin is a work of art. Each of the 10 different glazes is hand placed and separately fired. The result, from William Spear Design, is an eye-catching and colorful piece. The metal enamel pins are relief engraved in a 1½ x 2" size. #1695, $11.95.

Yosemite Association T-shirts. Comfortable, 100% cotton, light tan colored Hanes “Beefy-T” shirts are printed with the Association’s Half Dome logo in brown. Child sizes (short sleeve): small #1650, medium #1651, and large #1652, $7.05. Adult sizes (short sleeve): small #1653, medium #1654, large #1655, and extra-large #1656, $9.40; (long sleeve): small #1657, medium #1658, large #1659, and extra-large #1660, $11.75.

Order Form

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Subtotal: $ 1.50

6% Sales Tax (CA customers only): $ 0.09

Shipping charge: $ 1.50

Total enclosed: $ 1.50

Less 15% Member’s Discount: $ 0.22

Ordered by:

Name: __________________________
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City: ___________________________ State: __________ Zip: __________
Membership Number: ____________

Yosemite Association, T.O. Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318
The newly initiated "grants program" of the Yosemite Association became operative early this summer when five different research projects totaling some $19,000 were approved for funding. Under the supervision of the research program of the National Park Service, the grant recipients are already at work on their respective projects.

Subjects of the funded research are quite varied. A detailed palynological (pollen) study of Peregoy Meadow will be undertaken by Dr. R. Scott Anderson of Northern Arizona University. He hopes to document the changes in climate and vegetation of the area over the past 2,000 to 10,000 years. Estimated completion with report is February, 1989, and collected data will be incorporated into the Park Geographic Information System.

Another study will focus on the white-tailed ptarmigan, an introduced species in the Sierra Nevada. Glenn Frederick of Humboldt State University hopes to determine the distribution and abundance of the ptarmigan in the Sierra and to develop information about the habitat ecology of the bird. This is a two year project.

Sall J. Smith, also of Northern Arizona University, has as her goal the reconstruction of the long-term vegetation and fire history records of Swamp Lake through an analysis of fossil pollen and charcoal that has accumulated since the last glaciation. In doing this reconstruction, she hopes to derive a history of climatic changes in the region.

Her work should be completed late this summer.

The mountain beaver (Aplodontia rufa) is considered to be the most primitive living rodent. In the Sierra, it is a candidate for the endangered species list. Paul Todd of the University of Montana has designed a research study to determine the distribution, colony abundance, and habitat requirements of this mysterious mammal in Yosemite National Park. Date of completion for the two year project is November, 1989.

The final grant will allow Howard Weaver, a YA seminar instructor and gifted photographer, to research and write a 50 year history of the Ostrander Lake Ski Hut. Having spent 15 winters at Ostrander in his capacity as hutkeeper, Weaver has special qualifications to undertake the book which will cover such topics as early skiing, construction information, natural history, and visitor use over the years. He hopes to see his work published by December, 1990.

The Yosemite Association is delighted to be able to assist these scientists and researchers with their work, and to add to the body of knowledge about Yosemite.

Similar grant funding is planned for 1989. The application deadline for next year's program is December 1, 1986. Interested persons should write or call the Association for an application and further information.

New Members

We would like to welcome to the Yosemite Association the following fine persons who became members within the past three months. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Regular Members

Jane Maasheart, Mary Ann Morgan, Mark O'Bagley, Michelle Rogers, Roger & Nancy Rudolph, Holly Henning, J. C. Cooley, Gary & Beth Chernin, Donald R. Floyd, Beth Elliott, Ken Engstrom, Barbara Forshee, Steve Lambros & Laurie Gerloff, Jeannette Schiller, Geri Nicholas, Dorothy O'Connell, Lila Philpot, Stuart MacBrien, Patricia Weamer has specialized in climate and vegetation of the Ostrander Lake through an analysis of fossil pollen and charcoal that has accumulated since the last glaciation. In doing this reconstruction, she hopes to derive a history of climatic changes in the region.

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Join the Yosemite Association

You can help support the work of the Yosemite Association by becoming a member. Revenues generated by the Association's activities are used to fund a variety of National Park Service programs in Yosemite. Not only does the Yosemite Association publish and sell literature and maps, it sponsors field seminars, the park's Art Activity Center, and the Ostrander Lake Ski Hut.

A critical element in the success of the Association is its membership. Individuals and families throughout the country have long supported the Yosemite Association through their dues and their personal commitments. Won't you join us in our effort to make Yosemite an even better place?

Member Benefits

As a member of the Yosemite Association, you will enjoy the following benefits:

- A Yosemite Association decal
- Special membership gifts as follows:
  - Supporting Members: Matted print from an illustration by Jane Gyer in "Discovering Sierra Trees";
  - Contributing Members: Full color poster of Yosemite's wildflowers by Walter Syderia;
  - Sustaining Members: A colorful enameled pin depicting a Yosemite waterfall by William Spear;
  - Life Members: Matted color photograph by Howard Wreamer of a Yosemite scene; and
  - Participating Life Members: Ansel Adams Special Edition print, actually mounted.

Membership dues are tax-deductible as provided by law.

Please enroll me in the Yosemite Association as a . . .

- Regular Member $20.00
- Supporting Member $35.00
- Spouse add $5.00
- Contributing Member $50.00
- Sustaining Member $100.00
- Life Member $500.00
- Participating Life Member $1,000.00

Name (please print): Phone Number:
Address: City: State/Zip:
Enclosed is my check or money order for $ , or charge to my credit card
BankameriCard/VISA: Number Expiration Date
MasterCard: Number Expiration Date

Moving?

If you are moving, or have recently moved, don't forget to notify us. You are a valued member of the Association, and we'd like to keep in touch with you.

Yosemite Association

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