

Yosemite

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Finding One's Way in the Age of Motorized Bolting



The Electric Climber

Hannah Gosnell

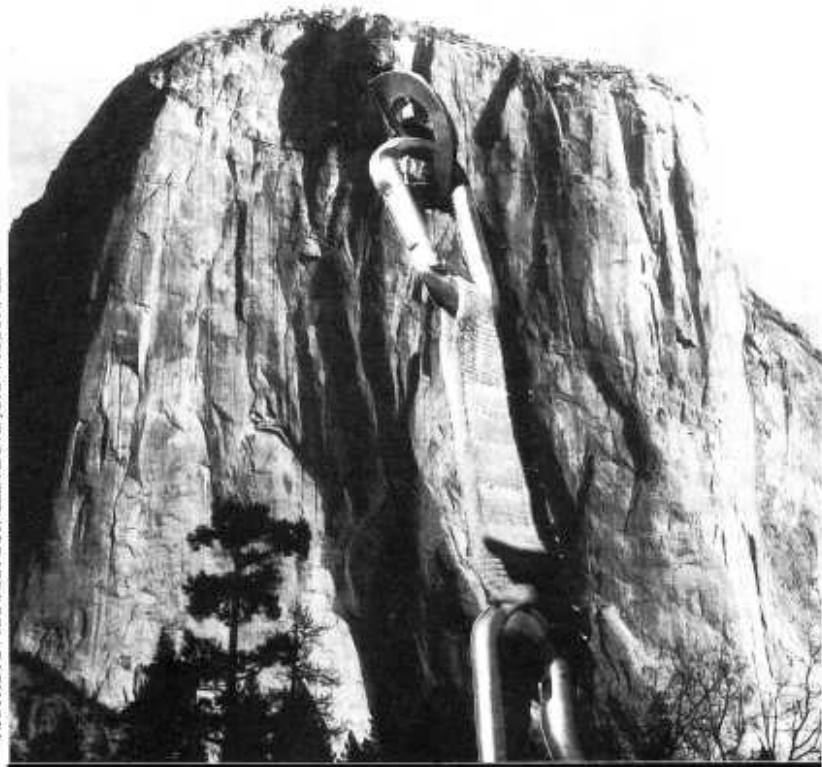
When **George Anderson** made the first ascent of Half Dome in 1875 by engineering a bolt ladder of sorts up the eastern flank of the monolith, no one spoke out against his impact on the resource. Nor did many object to the Sierra Club's 1919 attempt to make the peak more accessible to non-climber tourists by putting in an elaborate system of expansion bolts and cables to use as handrails. But in the past month, Yosemite Search and Rescue Office Bob Howard and Chief Ranger Roger Rudolph have been "swamped" with letters and

phone calls from people concerned about the number of bolts put in Yosemite's walls by rock climbers today.

Why this new interest in bolts? It's because modern technology (the cordless drill) is being utilized to accomplish very quickly what traditionally has been very slow and demanding work. That has resulted in more holes and more bolts in Yosemite granite.

Rudolph attributes the recent deluge of concerned letters and phone calls about bolting to increased media coverage in the last few months. "People think

NE'S PHOTO / HANNAH GOSNELL. ABOVE: JOHN MCCONNELL



In an attempt to prove that climbing big walls did not necessarily require the use of hundreds of bolts, Royal Robbins, Chuck Pratt and Tom Frost climbed the southwest face of El Capitan using only 13 bolts.

the walls of Yosemite are going to crumble," Rudolph said. "It's the bee that's gotten in everyone's bonnet." Rudolph and Howard agree that the issue has been blown out of proportion. "The media has gotten out of hand with its narrow focus on motorized bolting," Howard added. "In the past four days I've received three letters on the issue from concerned people as far away as New York." Because the issue has been causing heated debates in other climbing areas around the country — particularly the Front Range of the Rockies in Colorado — local reporters have started looking for some of the same conflicts in Yosemite. As it turns out, though, there isn't much of a controversy between climbers and officials at the park.

The fact is that climbers make up only 1 to 2% of Yosemite's visitor population. Thus, even these impacts seem small in the eyes of the Park Service. In a park where there are a number of pressing issues and a somewhat limited budget, climber-related problems are not at the top of the administration's priority list. Nonetheless, most people agree that the Park Service will be forced to become more involved in climber-related issues in Yosemite in the near future. The reason is not only that the issue is of growing concern to other land managers around the country, but it is also causing strife within the local climbing community.

Yosemite has strong roots in traditional climbing and mountaineering, and this makes many people reluctant to accept change in the park. To get a perspective on what is happening today, it is necessary to look at a bit of climbing history.

The Unclimbable

Right around the time that Yosemite first became a State Park, Clarence King and some others did the first serious topographical and geological reconnaissance of Yosemite Valley. They climbed many of the peaks around the rim

of the Valley, including El Capitan, Eagle Peak, Yosemite Point, North Dome, Basket Dome, Mt. Watkins, Sentinel Dome and Cathedral Rocks. Everything else was considered beyond the range of human climbing ability.

In 1865, the first California Geological Survey said about Half Dome, Mt. Starr King and Mt. Broderick, "Their summits are absolutely unaccessible." Ten years later, George Anderson proved them wrong with his ascent of

ing section of the Sierra Club started making organized attempts on the unclimbed faces and spires of Yosemite with ropes and soft iron pitons (for protection) that were somewhat limited in their usefulness (they could only be driven into perfectly parallel cracks). When John Salathe developed a stronger, more versatile kind of piton out of Model A Ford axles in 1945, he opened up a limitless number of first ascent possibilities. Salathe himself

the monolith). The three men put 675 pitons and 125 bolts into the rock during their ascent. In 1961, Harding was criticized for placing 110 bolts during an ascent of the Leaning Tower. He soon gained a reputation for placing excessive numbers of bolts, an activity which was thought of as not in keeping with the adventurous nature of the sport, as it afforded more protection than many thought necessary.

In an attempt to prove that



NPS PHOTO

Bolts allow climbers to accomplish special traverses like this one between the Valley's north wall and the Lost Arrow Spire.

Half Dome. Anderson's achievement paved the way for many more ascents of walls that were previously considered unclimbable, and throughout the 1800s, John Muir, George Bayley, James Hutchings and many others started a mountaineering tradition in Yosemite.

It wasn't until the 1930s, however, that ropework and technical climbing became popular in the park. In 1933, the first rock climb-

made the initial climb of the Lost Arrow Spire in 1947.

Bolts had already been introduced as a means of protection to American climbers in 1939 when David Brower and Bestor Robinson made the first ascent of Shiprock in New Mexico. With this combination of technologies — ropework, bolts and pitons — the 1950s and 1960s saw many first ascents on Yosemite's steepest, highest walls.

In 1958, Warren Harding, Wayne Merry and George Whitmore made the first ascent of the face of El Capitan via the Nose route (still the most popular on

climbing big walls did not necessarily require the use of hundreds of bolts, Royal Robbins, Chuck Pratt and Tom Frost climbed the southwest face of El Capitan using only 13 bolts. The "Salathe Wall," as they named it, is another one of the most frequently climbed routes on El Capitan today.

Excessive Hardware

One of the first major altercations over bolting occurred when Harding and Dean Caldwell drilled 300 holes in El Capitan in order to bolt their way up "The Wall of Early Morning Light" in 1970. Robbins was so offended by the exces-

Mark Tuttle is one of the more concerned individuals in the debate. He estimates that there are 16,000 bolts in Yosemite National Park today, and with the use of motorized drills and "rap-bolt" methods, the number is increasing at an alarming rate.

sive amount of hardware used to engineer the climb that he took it upon himself to "chop" all the bolts, making it unrepeatable. Part way up the route, however, he became so impressed with the climbing that he abandoned his chopping project. Still, Harding's and Caldwell's project strained most climbers' perception of the justifiable use of bolts. Today, the debate continues among climbers about when bolts should be placed, and more importantly, *how* they should be placed. The latter is what concerns the Park Service today.

As for the "hows" of bolting, up until about five years ago, climbers looking for a way to protect themselves on blank sections of rock (where no cracks existed in which to place removable hardware) had to use a hand drill and a hammer to make holes for placement of one-quarter inch bolts with hangers onto which they clipped carabiners — a process which could sometimes take half an hour for each bolt. The prevailing ethic was that new climbs were to be put in "from the ground up." That meant that in almost every case, climbers would be "on lead," with no rope above them, placing protection, drilling bolt holes, and placing bolts as they made their way up the wall. Usually the lead climber would not know what lay ahead, an uncertainty that contributed (and still contributes) to the adventurous nature of the sport.

Cordless Power

With today's technology, a climber can use a cordless power drill to place a larger and more formidable three-eighths inch bolt three inches deep into the rock in a matter of a few minutes. In addition, it is becoming more common to see climbers putting these bolts in from the top down, on rappel (i.e., hanging from ropes secured above them). Bolting on rappel allows the climber not only a preview of the climb, but the opportunity to place his or her protection with almost no risk of falling.

This method has traditionally

been scorned by Yosemite climbers, as it takes away from the risk and adventure of the sport. But today there are several locals who openly support this style. Proponents of power drills and bolting on rappel argue that the ease and convenience of the new methods have resulted in safer and more enjoyable routes,



HANNAH GOSNELL

A climber clips his carabiner into a bolt-mounted hanger.

not only because the bolts are bigger, stronger, and more plentiful, but because they are more strategically placed when put in on rappel, making for a more aesthetically pleasing climb. Climbers are more likely to put a greater number of bolts in a route, and do a better job at it, if the process only takes a few minutes and can be done without risk of life or limb. In contrast, when each bolt requires half an hour of hard labor and the climber is standing on small footholds while drilling, the workmanship may not be as good, and the climbs are more likely to be "run-out," meaning that bolts may be fewer and farther apart than subsequent climbers feel comfortable with.

Tucker Tech, a member of the

Valley's Search and Rescue Team who has climbed in Yosemite for 16 years and lived in the park for 11, claims that "in many cases, not using power tools compromises safety. Power drills have made many of the dicey anchors (on belay ledges) safer." Tech estimates that he has placed about 1,000 bolts in the park, mostly by hand. While he does not own a power drill (which cost in the neighborhood of \$330), he uses one whenever he has the opportunity. Tech claims that local climbers like himself have reached a consensus that "they don't care how the bolts go in, as long as the route is safe and a good line."

(It is interesting to note that this new philosophy is directly contrary to one which many Yosemite pioneers upheld during the "Golden Age" of Alpinism. Geoffrey Winthrop Young defined and articulated a philosophy, which according to Royal Robbins in a recent editorial in *Rock and Ice*, "has guided all of the great spirits of mountaineering." Winthrop believed that, "Getting to the top is nothing. The way you do is everything.")

The steady increase in the popularity of rock climbing combined with this new technology in drills and a European-imported ethic has resulted in a significant number of climbing routes in the Valley with bolts on them — many of them placed on rappel. This has caused consternation among those who feel that excessive activity of this sort is not in the best interest of the resource or the integrity of the sport.

Environmental Damage

Mark Tuttle, a local climber and owner of Merced Bike and Mountain Shop, is one of the more concerned individuals in the debate. He estimates that there are 16,000 bolts in Yosemite National Park today, and with the use of motorized drills and "rap-bolt" methods, the number is increasing at an alarming rate. "One rap-bolter with a power drill who climbs solidly all year could easily put in

one to two thousand bolts. What if you have 10 or 15 rap-bolters putting up climbs in Yosemite? Where is it going to end?" Tuttle estimates that there is a central core of 10 to 12 local climbers who actively endorse these methods, while a survey he conducted recently shows that 80% of those who climb in Yosemite prefer a more traditional style.

While Tuttle agrees that using a power drill makes climbs safer in some cases, his main concern is for the resource. "I feel that climbers should be able to choose the kind of climbing they do, but when it comes to environmental destruction, that's where I draw the line." Tuttle points out that geologists have found excessive drilling to cause premature exfoliation in the rock.

To protect Yosemite, Tuttle advocates the hiring of two or three people to patrol climbing areas and issue citations for the use of power drills. (Yosemite currently has no climbing rangers.) "If you ban *all* drilling of bolts, you put an end to first ascents, since all the crack lines have been done," he said. Drilling in bolts by hand would be acceptable to Tuttle: "If climbers are willing to put in the sweat and effort to put a bolt in, that's OK. It's just that mechanization makes it too easy to destroy the rock."

On the other side of the controversy is Armando Menocal, Chairman of the American Alpine Club's Access Fund, and one of the main spokespersons for the American climbing community. Menocal calls the whole bolting issue "much to do about very little," and estimates the total amount of rock moved as a result of bolting in Yosemite to be less than one cubic foot. He and others working on climber issues around the country resent the amount of time "wasted" belaboring the bolting issue. "Tuttle and some others are overstating the case. They get all excited about bolting and this prevents us from working on other more

Outlawing the use of power drills is the only thing they can do at this point — from a legal standpoint — short of banning bolting altogether, which seems highly unlikely.

important issues (such as erosion from braided trails and trash) with Park Service officials and other land managers."

Both Menocal and Roger Rudolph seem to be happy with the current state of climber/Park Service relations. "Yosemite is a model for the way climbers and land managers should work out problems," Menocal said. "When there is a problem, they contact us. They realize they can work with us as responsible members of the community. Some places don't call first. They just jump in and often regulate without consulting the public." (Menocal is referring to the recent introduction of bolting bans at several climbing areas around the country.)

In addition to organizing regular clean-ups of heavily impacted areas such as the base of Half Dome, the Access Fund and Yosemite National Park have recently combined efforts to produce a brochure written by climbers for climbers, to be distributed at Sunnyside Campground (where many climbers stay) and at the Mountaineering Shop in Yosemite Valley. The brochure advocates a "Climber's Code," recognizing that "the sport's current popularity combined with its evolving styles and objectives are having a noticeable effect on some areas . . ." The authors discuss such issues as establishing



CLARE RAUSTON/IPS

routes in heavily trafficked areas, disposing of human waste, and placing bolts where natural protection is available. They put the onus on the climbing community to be self-regulating and responsible users of the environment.

Rudolph and Howard felt strongly about having the brochure be written by climbers, recognizing that regulations coming from the top down would not be received as well. Rudolph advocates a Jeffersonian approach to managing the park: "That government which governs least, governs best," he said. Also, Yosemite does not have the funding or manpower to enforce regulations on climbers. The mandate to take care of the resource has to come from *within* the climbing community in most Park officials' minds.

While the Park Service cannot legislate morality and thus does not wish to get involved in the war over style and ethics, it does have a say in whether or not climbers may use mechanized devices for recreation in non-developed wilderness areas of the park. The Code of Federal Regulations states not only that there are to be no mechanized devices in non-developed areas (which include most places in the park that are 200 feet from a road), but also that there is to be no destruction or defacing of the resource.

Should Park Rangers be assigned the task of monitoring climbing routes to ensure that motorized drills are not being used?

Clearly, drilling holes in the rock to place bolts — whether by hand or by power drill — is defacing the resource. But Rudolph justifies the incongruity by explaining, "We allow climbers, and we allow bolts for safety. Hand drilled bolts are allowed and probably always will be. Electric drills have never been condoned."

In response to all the recent inquiries on this issue, the National Park Service recently (December 19, 1990) issued a press release that reads as follows:

"Yosemite National Park Superintendent Michael V. Finley would like to emphasize that there are regulations which prohibit the use of motorized drills for placing bolts on climbs in the park. The use of these drills has increased resource damage on the granite walls by drastically increasing the number of bolts. It has been and will continue to be the policy of the park to prohibit the use of these drills. Rangers will enforce this regulation."

As far as the Park Service is concerned, protection of the resource is the only issue at stake in this debate. Outlawing the use of power drills is the only thing they can do at this point — from

a legal standpoint — short of banning bolting altogether, which seems highly unlikely. Given that limitations on manpower prevent any significant enforcement of this law, most people agree that the impetus to keep Yosemite preserved as a mecca for climbers and non-climbers alike must come from within the climbing community itself.

As for the future of climbing styles and ethics, some argue that we must change with the times and go with the flow, while others, like Royal Robbins, fear that with the loss of tradition "we are witnessing the death of American rock climbing."

Hannah Gosnell, an instructor with the Yosemite Institute, is a graduate of Brown University.

October Quake Jolts Park

As if the August fires and government budget uncertainties weren't enough for Yosemite to contend with, a 5.7 earthquake shook the park at 11:15 p.m. last October 23. The epicenter of the tremor was approximately five miles north of Lee Vining where minor damage was reported. In Yosemite, a number of rock slides resulted and several roads in the park were closed. No injuries were reported.

On the Big Oak Flat Road between Yosemite Valley and Crane Flat, a 30-foot section of the roadway sustained significant damage. Fifteen road crew members worked to clear rocks and debris from the road, then stabilized the road with 500 to 600 rocks using rockwall construction to support the roadbed, and finally resurfaced the road. Both Highway 140 between El Portal and the Big Oak Flat Road junction, and the Tioga Road between Tioga Pass and Lee Vining were also closed by rockfall.



HANNAH GOSNELL

Search & Rescue Officer for Yosemite National Park, Bob Howard.

Comments on GMP Examination Report Summarized

In August of 1989, the National Park Service issued a Draft Yosemite 1980 General Management Plan Examination Report for public review. From September 1st to January 5, 1990 comments on that document were solicited and accepted.

Over 4,250 letters were received by the Park Service in response to the report, and last September a summary of the comments contained in those letters was released.

The NPS categorized responses by the major points emphasized in the comments. Park Service analysts believe the comments were influenced by the intense media coverage and letter writing campaigns by interest groups, and that the results are not necessarily representative of the entire Yosemite visitor population nor of the public at large.

Further, the summary makes clear that the Examination Report was strictly an informational, status document, not a decision document nor an amendment of the 1980 GMP. The NPS reaffirmed its commitment to the realization of the vision and intent of the 1980 General Management Plan, and indicated that any future GMP-related action will be undertaken under full NEPA compliance.

Summarizing the responses was complicated by the fact that not every respondent commented on all issues for which the NPS was tallying opinion. The results that are presented below provide the percentages of those who expressed an opinion on each topic.

As part of the summary, the National Park Service also described some of its upcoming



NPS PHOTO

Many commenters favored the extension of the shuttle bus system shown here in one of its earlier forms.

actions that relate to the General Management Plan. Two of the more significant projects are both studies. A rigorous evaluation of Yosemite visitor opinion is being made by way of a year-round, statistically valid visitor interview survey that began in June of 1990 at the park. Surveyors hope to assess visitor experiences, attitudes and perceptions, and explore such issues as crowding and park image. A non-visitor component of the study will examine the attitudes of those who do not visit Yosemite and try to determine why.

The second project is a housing study that will lead to a draft Environmental Impact Statement on housing alternatives. The study will involve scoping and analysis for comprehensive and definitive relocation formulas for employee housing. The study will examine and evaluate a full range of alternatives. When the EIS is complete, the NPS will convene public meetings on the various housing options that have been identified.

Responses

| | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| Support 1980 GMP as is: | | |
| Yes | 2312 | 87% |
| No | 335 | 13% |
| Valley Accommodations: (tents, hotels) | | |
| Increase | 55 | 2% |
| Decrease | 1130 | 49% |
| Stay the same | 1121 | 49% |
| Valley Housing: (NPS, YP&CCo) | | |
| Upgrade | 33 | 3% |
| Decrease | 800 | 65% |
| Stay the same | 398 | 32% |
| Valley Traffic: (cars, congestion) | | |
| Increase | 2 | .1% |
| Decrease | 287 | 16.8% |
| Stay the same | 89 | 5.1% |
| Limit | 1331 | 78% |
| Valley Parking: (parking spaces, lots) | | |
| Increase | 199 | 19% |
| Decrease | 286 | 28% |
| Stay the same | 554 | 53% |
| Mass Transit: (extend shuttles, satellite shuttle) | | |
| Extend/increase shuttle | 498 | 39% |
| Long-range satellite shuttle | 377 | 30% |
| Both increase and satellite | 126 | 10% |
| Support mass transit | 241 | 19% |
| No new systems | 22 | 2% |

Drive a "Yosemite"

The January 1991 issue of *Car and Driver* includes news that GMC is deciding whether to call its 1992 Jimmy "the Yukon," "the Wolftrack," or "the Yosemite." The last was preferred by a GMC executive, but research showed that only half the country could pronounce "Yosemite."

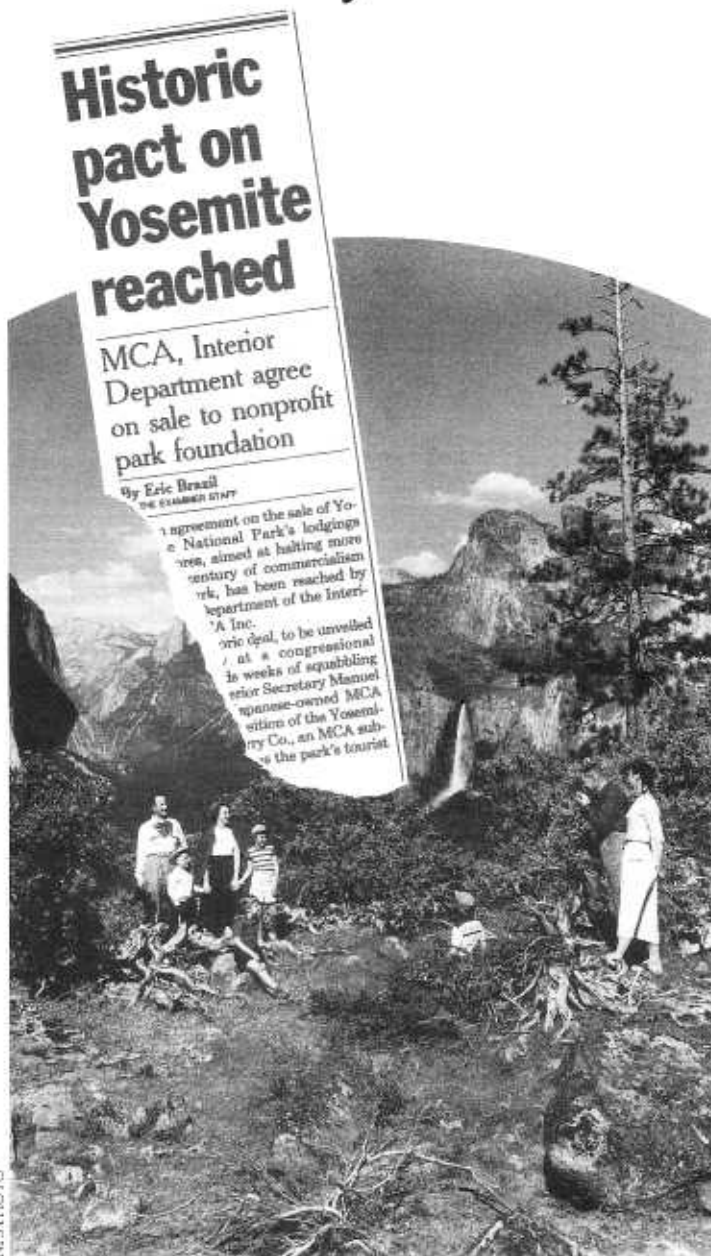
Yosemite Park & Curry Co. To Be Sold

In a development that could have considerable impact on Yosemite's future, an agreement was reached in January for the sale of the assets of the park's major concessioner, the Yosemite Park & Curry Co., to the non-profit National Park Foundation in 1993. The deal was catalyzed by the sale of Curry's parent company, entertainment giant MCA Inc., to Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. of Japan.

The arrangement capped more than a month of controversy and speculation that began with the announcement of the MCA transfer to Japanese ownership. Originally that transaction was not to include the Yosemite Park & Curry Co., but following a highly convoluted process of negotiation, the parties settled on terms that will leave the present Curry management in place until the end of the existing concession contract (1993), and allow Matsushita to own Curry Co. until that time.

When the contract expires, the National Park Foundation will become the nominal owner of the Yosemite concession which will be donated in turn to the National Park Service. The operating contract will be put out to bid to all interested parties, and whoever is selected will be called upon to service the debt incurred to purchase Curry's assets. The announced purchase price was \$49.5 million, which with interest will grow to some \$60 million by 1993 when payments will begin.

In development of the agreement, the National Park Service and the US Department of the Interior were active participants. An original proposal to handle the Curry Co. in a bank-supervised escrow to be managed by an MCA-appointed committee outside the MCA-Matsushita sale (with profits to the National Park Foundation) was rejected by Park Service Director James Ridenour. The MCA transaction was completed anyway, and the future of Yosemite's concession was left in limbo.



NPS PHOTO

Will the sale of the Yosemite Park & Curry Co. change to any extent the way Americans have traditionally enjoyed Yosemite?

Along the way efforts were made by the San Francisco-based non-profit Yosemite Restoration Trust to purchase the Curry Co., and Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan attempted to convince Matsushita officials simply to donate the concession to the National Park Service or the National Park Foundation. Complicating the negotiations was Lujan's xenophobic position that it was inappropriate for a Japanese company to own assets in an American national park. Apparently

many US citizens agreed, for Lujan's mail reportedly ran strongly in favor of his stand.

At one point Lujan sarcastically said, "Happy New Year! A Japanese company now owns exclusive rights to do business in Yosemite." He threatened to cancel the Curry contract if a deal could not be reached, and MCA reacted by accusing him of Japan bashing and of trying to intimidate and coerce MCA into donating the Curry Co. against its will.

In the middle of this posturing, Congress entered the fray by calling for House subcommittee hearings on the fate of the Curry Co. and the implications of for-

A Chronology of the Deal

November 26—The sale of MCA to Matsushita is announced.

November 27—MCA announces that the Yosemite Park & Curry Co. will not be part of the sale to Matsushita. The company will be placed in a bank-supervised escrow with profits to go to the National Park Foundation. An American buyer will be found within a year.

December 22—The NPS refuses to approve proposed arrangement for Curry.

December 29—The MCA-Matsushita sale is completed. The Curry Co. remains in limbo.

December 31—Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan, irritated and angry about the state of negotiations, threatens to cancel the Curry contract.

January 1—Lujan voices his concerns about Japanese ownership in American national parks while pressuring Matsushita to donate the Curry Co.

January 2—MCA accuses Lujan of Japan bashing, intimidation and coercion.

January 3—Congressman Bruce Vento calls for hearings on the Curry Co. and the Yosemite concession before the House Subcommittee on National Parks & Public Lands.

January 4-7—Negotiations continue in Washington.

January 8—Sale of Yosemite Park & Curry Co. to the National Park Foundation is consummated.

foreign ownership in US national parks.

Resolution came on January 8 when the MCA-National Park Foundation agreement was signed. It came just one day before the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands was scheduled to meet. Under the terms of the deal, the Yosemite

ite Park & Curry Co. will continue to operate Yosemite's hotels, restaurants and other guest facilities until 1993 and will donate \$2 million dollars a year for three years to the National Park Foundation. The sale will be financed by MCA at an interest rate of 8.5%.

The real details of the sale will not be known until 1993 when a new concession operator is selected. In the meantime, the development has been greeted with varying reactions. Many believe this represents a landmark change in the handling of concessions in national parks and in the way parks are funded. Others are less optimistic and are reserving judgment pending implementation of the change.



NPS PHOTO

Several environmental groups reacted negatively recently when NPS Director Ridenour was quoted as saying that the level of commercial activity at Yosemite would remain essentially

the same. His remarks were viewed as a "letdown" by those who had hoped that reductions in commercial facilities and automobile traffic might occur following the sale. (He later indicated that there would be a 17% reduction in lodgings in Yosemite Valley.) Other critics have suggested that the sale will result in no changes of any kind at Yosemite.

In the meantime, it will be pretty much status quo in the operation of the Yosemite concession. Changes shouldn't be expected until 1993 at the earliest. It's then we'll learn if the vaunted sale of the Yosemite Park & Curry Co. is a "landmark," a disappointment, or something in between.

Reactions to the Deal

"It's a fantastic deal. I don't think anything like this has ever taken place." — *NPS Director JAMES RIDENOUR*

"This is a watershed event and it is symbolic that it comes at our centennial, and is notable in that it will take us into our second hundred years." — *Yosemite Superintendent MIKE FINLEY*

"I fully anticipate that YP&CCo. will be a solid contender for the new contract, regardless of who owns the company at that time. The skill and expertise which all (Curry Co. employees) have shown are well-regarded with the National Park System and were commented upon very favorably by Secretary Lujan in his recent appearance before the Congressional hearing." — *YP&CCo President ED HARDY*

"The important question remains: Will this agreement lead to more resource protection and less commercialization at Yosemite? On this point the jury is still out." — *Wilderness Society President GEORGE FRAMPTON*

"This is no time for a victory celebration. The basic public concerns about commercialism in Yosemite and the impact caused by vehicles remain to be dealt with. If we only change rider, the question remains, will Yosemite be better off?" — *Former NPS Western Regional Director HOWARD CHAPMAN*

"The sale is a major event that will lead to concessions reform throughout the park system. Nearly all of Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan's concessions reform objectives have been achieved by the agreement." — *NPCA Regional Representative RUSS BUTCHER*

"I still believe there is going to be a need for vigilance on the part of the public to ensure the Park Service doesn't backslide." — *Environmentalist PATRICIA SCHIFFERLE*

Terms of the Deal

- The assets of the Yosemite Park & Curry Co. will be sold to the National Park Foundation for \$49.5 million in 1993. The sale price will bear interest at 8.5% beginning February 1, 1991.
- MCA will continue to own and operate the Curry Co. until September, 1993 with no change in the level of services offered.
- MCA will donate \$2 million annually to the National Park Foundation for the next three years.
- At the request of the National Park Foundation, the Yosemite Park & Curry Co. Board of Directors can be expanded to include two representatives of the Foundation.
- The National Park Foundation will have no preferential right of renewal for the concession contract (nor will the new operator), and the new concessioner will relinquish any possessory interest in the concession assets over the term of the contract.
- Beginning in 1993, the new franchise fee to be paid by the concessioner to the US Government will be 11%. Until then it remains at .75%.

Issues Remaining Unresolved

- Who will win Yosemite's concession contract in 1993?
- Will the 11% franchise fee remain in the park to benefit Yosemite or will it be deposited in the General Treasury?
- Will the National Park Foundation use the \$2 million it receives each year to benefit Yosemite? Will it take an administrative fee?
- Will the National Park Foundation exercise its option to expand the YP&CCo board? If so, who will be selected for the board?
- Will the sale result in fewer commercial activities in Yosemite or will development stay at present levels?
- Will any new concessioner be able to service the debt to MCA and pay an 11% franchise fee at the same time?
- How long will be the term of the next concession contract?
- Will the new concession contract require implementation of key aspects of the 1980 General Management Plan for Yosemite?
- Will the sale result in any more money to be used at Yosemite?



NPS PHOTO

It Can Never Be Painted!

THE PIONEER ARTISTS OF YOSEMITE



NPS PHOTO

Katherine M. Littell

On July 25, 1864, President Lincoln signed a bill granting the Yosemite Valley to the State of California to be conserved for the recreational enjoyment of the public. This act represented a policy never before applied to the management of the public domain.

With the establishment of the Yosemite Grant under state stewardship, wilderness became of equal value with great works of art, something to be protected, enjoyed and revered as a source of spiritual benefit. Artists, who traversed the Yosemite as explorers, tourists, interpreters of its magnificent views or who lived in the Valley for the purpose of painting its wonders year-round,

thus had a different focus for their interpretations of wilderness from that expressed in the Hudson River School with which they shared similarities in art styles and a romantic relationship to nature.

The painters of the Hudson River School established the American art scene as an appropriate subject for art and landscape painting as a source of edification. For these reasons the government began to support landscape art with commissions for public buildings.

The idea that government, however, on behalf of the public, should incur costs to protect wilderness itself in its natural state was first born with the Yosemite Grant, and the artists who painted its views were all differently

affected by this idea. With few exceptions, their work and lives as artists, either enthusiastically or reluctantly, took on a political dimension, which the Hudson River artists did not share despite their government commissions.

Although the pioneer artists of the Yosemite all have a naturalistic approach to their subject, they developed great diversity of style in their effort to portray nature exactly as it appeared to each of them as meticulously as possible. Just as the inspiration of John Muir's writings encouraged a naturalistic rather than a poeticized description of wilderness in the Yosemite artists' work, the unique diversity of the Yosemite scenery evoked highly individual, artistic development well-suited to artists who were frequently self-taught.

"Yosemite Valley" by Albert Bierstadt.

Ranging as the Yosemite Valley does from the impersonally dramatic sculptural rock formations created by glaciers to the Barbizon intimacy of its forests and glades, artists were forced to differentiate their styles to capture its compelling beauty. The artists of the Hudson River School differ from the Yosemite artists in that they created in their views of nature a sense of place derived from special spiritual preoccupations of their own, while the Yosemite artists approached nature with a naturalistic, matter-of-fact realism intended to penetrate nature's secrets and reveal nature's own spirituality latent in its forms.

The pristine magic of the Yosemite which the pioneer artists



sought to capture was manifest in its irresistible impact upon the very ordinary mortals who inadvertently discovered the Valley in 1851 and those who explored it in 1855. Ironically, it was James Mason Hutchings, one of several homesteaders, who later contested the withdrawal of the Yosemite from settlement lands, who brought the first artist into the Valley.

Thomas Ayres

Thomas Ayres was selected by Hutchings to provide views of the Valley for Hutchings' magazine, *California Illustrated*. "Passing scene after scene of unutterable sublimity, and sketching those deemed most noteworthy," Hutchings and his party proceeded through the uncharted territory of the magnificent gorge with Ayres as their explorer-artist.

Born in 1816, Ayres worked as a draughtsman in St. Paul, Minnesota with an engineering firm before arriving in California during the Gold Rush of 1849. He soon abandoned his gold-mining in favor of art as an itinerant recorder of California scenery in charcoal and graphite. The sketches Ayres made of Yosemite during the Hutchings expedition of 1855, and a second series of Yosemite drawings, were exhibited at the American Art Union in 1857.

This exhibition earned the artist a commission from *Harper's Illustrated Weekly* to create sketches for articles on California. Ayres began in San Diego and travelled north to San Francisco, sketching all the way in fulfillment of this commission. On April 26, 1858, having accomplished his mission, Ayres boarded the *Laura Bevan* at San Pedro harbor en route for San Francisco. Beset by a storm, the ship sank, taking all its passengers down with it, as well as Ayres's sketches of California.

Frederick Law Olmsted

The unfortunate artist's drawings of Yosemite, however, were



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not without effect. In 1866 the California Legislature accepted the Grant, established two years earlier by President Lincoln, and appointed a Commission to manage the Yosemite Grant and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove which consisted of eight distinguished California citizens who served without compensation under the chairmanship of Frederick Law Olmsted.

Two San Francisco artists helped prompt this acceptance. In 1865, Olmsted, a landscape gardener and dedicated supporter of wilderness conservation, had commissioned Virgil Williams, future Director of the California School of Design in San Francisco, and Thomas Hill, as well as photographer C.E. Watkins, to make a special study of Yosemite's scenery and determine how best to render the natural wonders of the Grant accessible to the public.

Olmsted's letter reflects his own selfless dedication as well as that expected from the artists whom he invited to take on an enormous amount of work, hardship and personal expense without any reimbursement or compensation. Dated Yosemite, August 9th, 1865, Olmsted writes to "Messrs. Williams, Hill & Watkins" in one communication:

"I address you on behalf of the Commissioners appointed under the Act of Congress, establishing the Yosemite and Mariposa

Grove as a ground for recreation. The action of Congress with regard to the Yosemite was doubtless taken in view of the peculiar value of its natural scenery; the purpose of its action was to give the public for all future time the greatest practicable advantage of that scenery, and the duty of the Commission is to secure the accomplishment of that purpose. What affects natural scenery favorably or unfavorably to the enjoyment of mankind is the principal study of your lives and as you are at present making a special study of the scenery of the Yosemite you may find it convenient to give some thought incidentally to two general questions your advice upon which would be of great service to the commission:

1st. Are there any conditions affecting the scenery of the Yosemite unfavorably which it would be in the power of the State to remove, or the further and increased effect of which might be prevented?

2nd. What can be done by the State to enhance the enjoyment now afforded by the scenery of the Yosemite?

The commission being required by Act of Congress to perform its own duties gratuitously and no provision having been made for meeting any expenses in the premises, I cannot promise the pecuniary remuneration for your advice which it would be your right to demand but it is hoped that the importance of the Commission's duty as a field of study for artists and the great interests of the public in having the action to be taken by the State well advised present sufficient grounds of apology for requesting your professional assistance as a favor."

C E Watkins

Watkins' photographs effectively publicized the Yosemite as far away as Boston. In 1863 Oliver Wendell Holmes had written of Watkins' California views



NPS PHOTO

which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*:

"One of the most interesting accessions to our collections is a series of twelve views, on glass, of scenes and objects in California, sent us with unprovoked liberality by the artist, Mr. Watkins. As specimens of art they are admirable, and some of the subjects are among the most interesting to be found in the whole realm of nature."

Watkins had made his first trip to the Yosemite in 1858 or 1859. In 1861 he photographed Galen Clark, discoverer of the Mariposa Big Tree Grove, beside the "Grizzly Giant," thus creating one of the earliest photographs ever of the *Sequoia gigantea*.

Thomas Hill

In 1862, Thomas Hill had made his first trip to the Yosemite, accompanied by Keith and



NPS PHOTO



"Mirror Lake" by Albert Bierstadt.
Courtesy of the Santa Barbara
Museum of Art.

Virgil Williams. In 1866 Hill exhibited Yosemite scenes at the National Academy of Design in New York, and in 1868 he consigned a large panorama of Yosemite to Boston's Tremont Gallery. *The Boston Commonwealth* in 1868 wrote of this picture:

"...the principal picture is Thomas Hill's Yosemite Valley which was exhibited in the gallery last summer, when it was universally pronounced the best representative of the great natural wonder of California ever produced by any painter."

The artists' reverential recreations of what they saw as well as the reports written by Fitz Hugh Ludlow for the *Atlantic Monthly* did nothing to remedy the frustration of practical men in the California State legislature, however, confronted as of 1866 with the obligation to maintain at public expense a large territory which, though beautiful, produced nothing and promised never to cover its own expenses.

In 1869, the Secretary of the Commission duly set forth in the obligatory biennial report to Governor Haight both prongs of the Commissioners' dilemma: widespread public hostility in Califor-

nia to the Yosemite Grant and the consequent reluctance of the legislature to appropriate the funds necessary for its management.

Homesteaders in the Valley compounded the Commissioners' predicament by refusing to accept their authority at all. The selfless dedication of the Commissioners, of whom Galen Clark was one, to building public appreciation of the Valley and encouraging tourism, did eventually turn the tide in favor of the Yosemite Grant.

Quite correctly, Commissioner Leman saw in tourism to the Yosemite the only means of making the Grant financially viable and beneficial to the public rather than a heavy burden upon a reluctant taxpayer. Profitability and the general perception of egalitarian benefit alone, the Commissioners foresaw, could protect the Yosemite Grant's "pristine beauty" from desecration by development or neglect.

Increasingly, the Commissioners looked to artists and photographers to popularize the unique loveliness of the Grant, but even this was resisted by vitriolic elements among the public. Ambrose Bierce, for example, rejoiced with "grim satisfaction" in the "destruction by fire of Bierstadt's celebrated picture of Yosemite Valley," which he pro-

claimed had "incited more unpleasant people to visit California than all our conspiring hotel-keepers could compel to return," and in the *San Francisco Newsletter*, September 7, 1869, he wrote that Bierstadt's misfortune was a "blow . . . finally struck at the root of immigration."

Bierce went on to hypothesize sarcastically: "If we can now coral Hill's painting and send East all the rest we may hope for peace. If not, we trust some daring spirit will be found to blow up the infernal valley with Giant powder or glycerine soap."

On June 26, 1882, eighteen years after the bill had been signed by President Lincoln, the *San Francisco Chronicle* still called the Yosemite Grant "a white elephant" and complained that the poor were paying for its support while only the rich — foreign and native — could afford to enjoy it. "It is wrong in principle and oppressive in practice," editorialized the *Chronicle*, "for any government to tax the common people and the poor for the exclusive benefit of the rich."

James Madison Alden

Although artists are reputedly poor, many made the arduous trek to the Yosemite Valley, the sole enticement being the splendid inspiration of the views.

James Madison Alden, artist of the first government survey of the Pacific Coast and official artist of the Northwestern Boundary Survey, travelled with the survey ship, *Active*, wintering in San Francisco and surveying in the spring along the California Coast. San Diego Harbor, Santa Barbara Channel Islands and San Francisco Bay were all charted in addition to other areas. During this time Alden travelled inland to the Grand Canyon, Sierra Nevada Mountains and Yosemite.

Of Alden's nine watercolors of Yosemite, six are dated 1859. His views are essentially topographical and unromanticized, allowing objective comparisons between actual sizes and shapes of various geological features. His studies have blandness, however, that is incompatible with the Valley's grand moods and sparkling vivacity. Alden was more a detached and neutral observer than an artist.

William Smith Jewett

Popular San Francisco portrait painter, William Smith Jewett visited Yosemite in 1861. His paintings, *Bridal Veil Falls* and *Jupiter's Spires*, are dated that year. Born in South Dover, New York on August 6, 1812, Jewett studied at the National Academy of Design and was active as a portrait painter in New York City from 1833 until 1849 when he joined the Gold Rush to California. After a short period in the mines, he opened studios in San Francisco and Sacramento.

Albert Bierstadt et al

Albert Bierstadt journeyed across the United States in 1863 with Fitz Hugh Ludlow, critic for the *New York Evening Post*, an unstable, minor writer commissioned to publish impressions of the trip in a book. Virgil Williams, whom Bierstadt knew in Rome, and geologist John Hewston, joined them in San Francisco. Enoch Wood Perry, Jr., a genre, landscape and portrait painter

took part in the expedition. Perry had studied with Leutze in Dusseldorf for two years and with Couture in Paris, served in 1857 as U.S. Consul in Venice and from 1861-1865 maintained a studio in San Francisco where he painted primarily portraits.

This distinguished company travelled into the Yosemite via the Mariposa Trail. In the Big Tree Grove they met Galen Clark, and Bierstadt painted a picture of Clark standing at the foot of one of the Sequoias.

Ludlow's journal records that the group descended into the Valley from Inspiration Point and made a camp in a meadow on the Merced River, where they remained for seven weeks. Virgil Williams painted a picture of his four friends resting on the Merced riverbank with Cathedral Spires looming large in the background and titled his work *Along the Mariposa Trail*. Sketches made during this period by the three painters provided each with a wealth of material that served as studies for many of their finest paintings of the Valley.

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss all of the artists who pilgrimaged to the Valley, a list which includes such diverse talent as William Hahn, Gilbert Munger, Herman Herzog, Constance Gordon-Cumming, William Keith, Hugo Fisher, James David Smillie, Thomas Moran, and William Rice.

Chris Jorgensen

Of the artists known to have established studios in the park in which they both lived and sold their wares, Thomas Hill and Chris Jorgensen built the most substantial and best known studios.

Chris Jorgensen, who first came into the Park in 1898 to sketch, had been a student of Thomas Hill's in San Francisco. Hill so admired Jorgensen's work that he gave the young artist a key to his studio. In 1900 Jorgensen secured permission to build a



NES PHOTO

studio on his campsite along the banks of the Merced River.

The Jorgensen residence, designed by Oakland architect Walter Matthews, with its living room dedicated to the display of the artist's paintings, was sub-

stantial and was described by the *San Francisco Chronicle* on February 17, 1901, as one of the "most unique and artistic studios on the coast." The center of the house was the twenty-four foot square studio-living room, a floor plan similar to the Hill studio-reception room.

On February 22, 1903, the *San Francisco Call Bulletin* published an interview with Chris Jorgensen entitled "The Inspiration of Yosemite," in which the artist described his appreciation of the Park and revealed the continuing attraction Yosemite has for all artists who paint there:

"I was born in Norway. I have travelled all over Europe, and I know California pretty thoroughly, and I don't think there is a place in the world that can equal

the Yosemite for inspiration to an artist.

This is not an old prejudice, born of sentiment or habit. It was a conclusion that I reached only four years ago, after I had done my travelling, had studied and painted for years, and knew the charm of many another place. So there was no youthful fervor such as goes with inexperience. My appetite for scenery had had a chance to become blase, if an artist's appetite ever could do so. It was at this point that the Yosemite came upon me as something new and more wonderful than anything I had ever known.

Four years ago, . . . I went for two weeks, and I more than doubled the length of time before I left . . . I believe that there is no such inspiration in the world. I believe, too, that it has never been painted and never can be. Perhaps that has something to do with the fascination — the futility of every attempt. Month after month I work there, feeling at every trial that I have caught some secret now, some trick by which I can capture and hold to my canvas a long wooded effect, but it always eludes me. The sublimity of the place is something that man is too small to reproduce.

That is the keynote of its power — sublimity. To aim at painting its grandeur is to aim at the greatest that exists. Surely this is the best thing an artist can do. He will never reach the goal, but he has hitched his wagon to a star."

Katherine M. Littell has studied the fine art of Yosemite for a number of years, giving special attention to the work of Chris Jorgensen. She holds a Master's Degree from Harvard in Germanic Languages and Literatures. This article first appeared in the Newsletter of the Harvard Graduate Society and is used with permission. A list of citations for quotes and other sources is available upon request.



NES PHOTO

A Troubling Second Century

David M. Graber

This year marks the beginning of Yosemite National Park's second century, as it does for Sequoia National Park. Kings Canyon, between them along the crest of the Sierra Nevada, begins its second half-century. All three can look back with satisfaction at stewardships that set examples for national parks throughout the world, and that largely accomplished the mission of a National Park Service yet younger than the parks themselves. They have continued to provide for the enjoyment of successive generations of visitors while conserving a landscape and resource base largely unimpaired.

Like the new Alaskan parks, but unlike most contemporary acquisitions, the Sierran national parks were not only intact when they were established, they were carved out of a vast chunk of thinly-settled, contiguous mountain wilderness. Native Indian populations who mostly used the high Sierra for seasonal hunting

had been almost extirpated by conquest.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks have lost only two species of vertebrates since their establishment: the grizzly bear in the 1920s, and the foothill yellow-legged frog in the 1970s. Yosemite additionally lost its Sierra bighorn sheep at about the turn of the century, and suffered the indignity of O'Shaughnessy Dam drowning Hetch Hetchy Valley in its early years.

To this day, Sequoia bears the scars of a flume built in the 1920s and of some small reservoirs acquired, along with Mineral King, in 1978, but the most serious ecological assaults on it and Kings Canyon were the sheep grazing that brutalized their mountain meadows, nearly a century of fire suppression that had begun to choke forest and chaparral communities, and the invasion of more than 100 species of alien plants. In the foothills of Sequoia, Mediterranean grasses now dominate the herbaceous layer and no doubt have profoundly altered

the oak woodland community there. But bighorn have been restored to Yosemite; the mountain meadows have almost entirely recovered, and fire has returned both as management burns and natural fires.

The challenge of the second century will be something quite unlike what the Sierran parks faced in the first. Population growth in California and the rest of the world will inevitably translate to ever-increasing demand for limited facilities in the small developed zones of the parks. Although only a smattering of visitors wander more than a few hundred meters beyond blacktop, providing for more of them would mean not only new structures and road, but conversion of more scarce water from natural to human use and increased pollution.

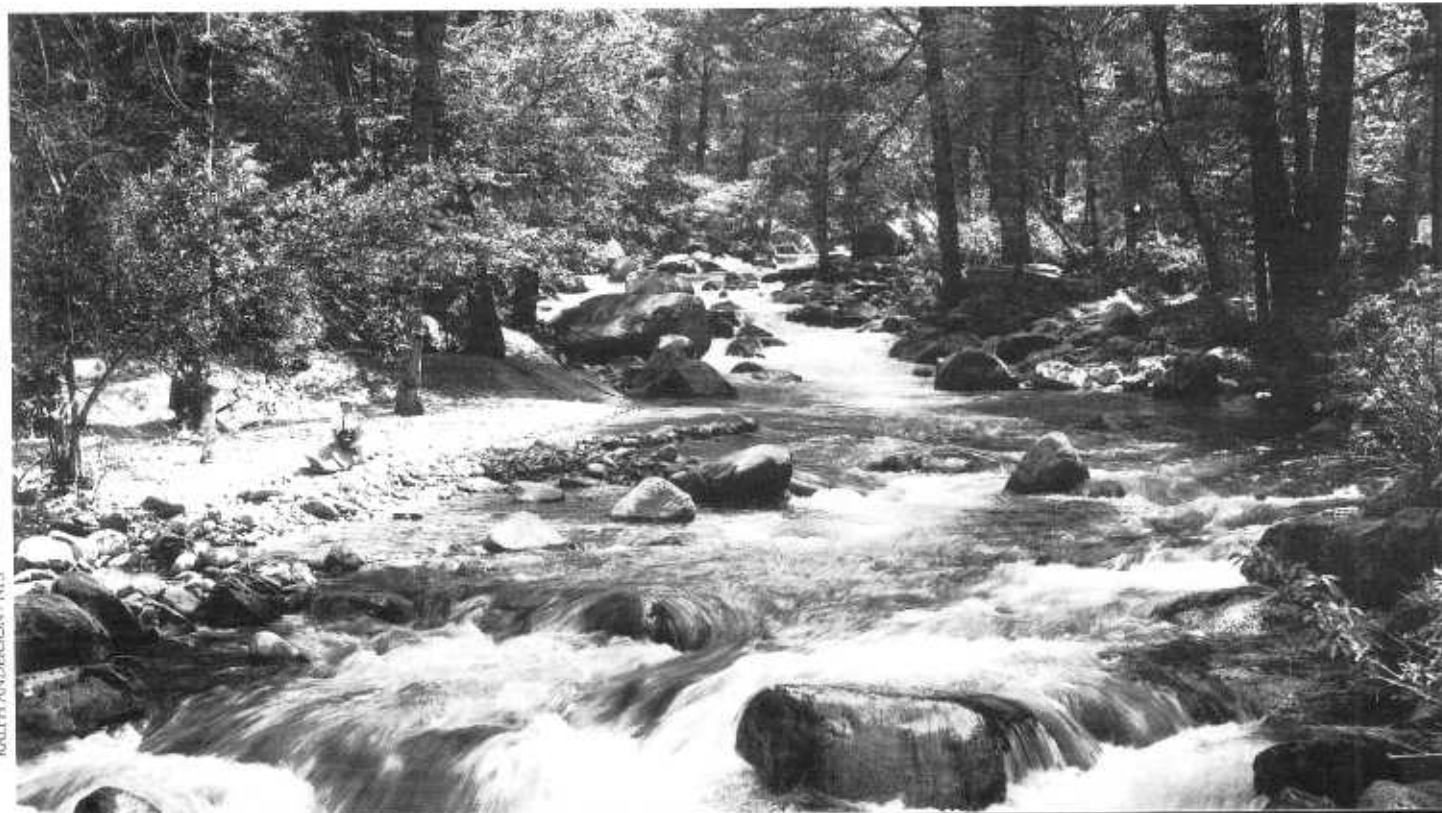
Backcountry use has been nearly flat for more than a decade; stock parties are smaller and fewer than they were in years past. Demand only locally and occasionally exceeds the wilderness

permit allocation system designed to disperse use. Only a handful of campsites and trails have had to be closed because of excessive resource impact. *Giardiasis*, however, and increased sensitivity to wilderness water quality have confronted the Park Service with an unsolved sewage disposal problem in popular camping areas where low temperatures, hard-rock granite, or marmot marauders foil every scheme.

It's hard to say when another wave of popularity will strike backpacking as it did 20 years ago, but the rising tide of humanity would seem to make it inevitable. Dispersed use would have to give way to designated campsites if visitor nights increase significantly. Conflicts between stock users and hikers may pale against the demands of new cultural groups redefining wilderness ethics.

The continuing evolution of

Happy Isles, Merced River. The impacts of visitors will be small compared to the challenge of preserving ecosystems.



RALPH ANDERSON / NPS

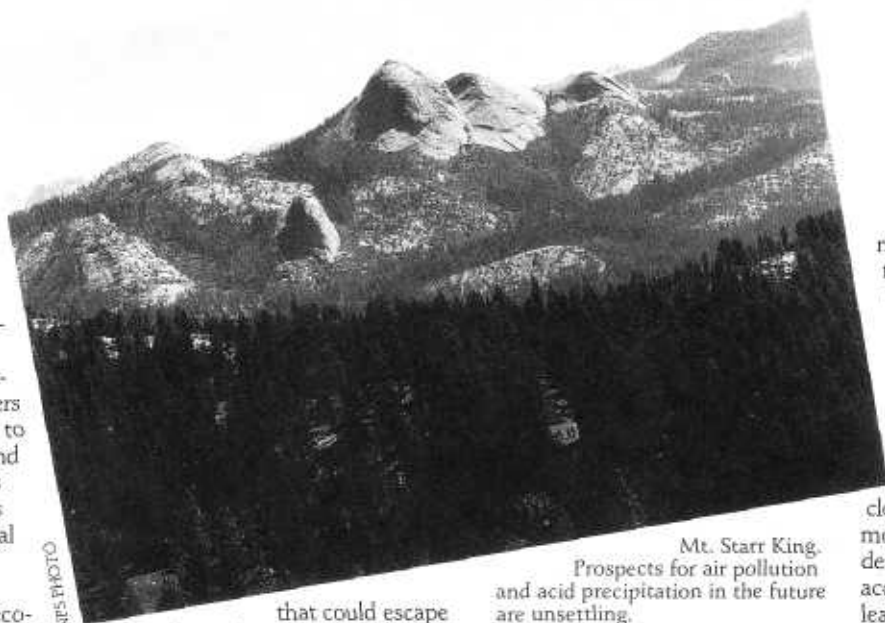
technology presents opportunities for resource protection, and unresolved conflicts with traditional park ethics and the Wilderness Act. Portable radios and helicopters have made it far simpler to locate missing people, and to transport injured ones out of wilderness. Mules and horses, the traditional means of transporting equipment in the backcountry, have a greater ecological impact through their consumption of forage and trampling than do helicopters, which are also cheaper to operate and more versatile at carrying unwieldy or delicate items — but helicopters are more disruptive of a “wilderness experience” than is a pack train.

And what of the radio repeaters, satellite uplinks, and data acquisition platforms multiplying in the Sierran backcountry, there for safety, to provide information on snow conditions and the year's water supply, or to monitor ecosystem conditions? Will we destroy the essence of wilderness while trying to protect wilderness ecosystems?

The impacts of visitors and visitor services, however, will be small compared to the challenge of preserving ecosystems and their constituent elements functioning in something resembling a natural, wild fashion, in the face of onslaughts from beyond park boundaries.

Insularization

Logging, mining, grazing, hydrological development, and human settlement have begun to dismember the once-contiguous Sierran wilderness. The consequences of “conflicting uses” beyond park boundaries will continue to grow in the next century. Already, the parks' natural fire management program is hamstrung by the elimination of fires that once naturally burned into the parks, by park neighbors effectively opposed to park fires



NPS PHOTO

Mt. Starr King.
Prospects for air pollution
and acid precipitation in the future
are unsettling.

that could escape boundaries, and by local and state controls on smoke production of fires.

That's just the beginning. New species of alien plants and animals will invade, especially from adjacent foothill farms and villages. Bullfrogs are a recent example. Introduced populations of beavers outside Sequoia and white-tailed ptarmigan adjacent to Yosemite — both alien — will provide a perennial source of invasion. On the other hand, hunting and poaching pressure will increase on native animals like mule deer and black bear whose home ranges take them beyond park boundaries. Every population of Sierra bighorn sheep is threatened with disease-induced extinction from domestic sheep when they winter on the east slope of the Sierra.

Air Pollution

Despite its legal status entitling it to “Class I” air quality, Sequoia is one of the smoggiest wilderness parks in the country. Research in the past decade has traced the increasing impacts of ozone on pines and now finds effects on the giant sequoias, and has recorded acid precipitation in rain and dry particles. Given the stunning population growth in the San Joaquin Valley — the stagnant air basin adjacent to the Sierran parks — prospects for the future are unsettling.

Global Development

Loss of wetlands in California and Mexico has drastically re-

duced waterfowl populations that used to migrate along the Sierra. Tropical and subtropical deforestation is the most important, but not the only cause for the sharp and continuing decline of migratory songbird populations in the parks. Old-timers lament the loss of song and color from Sierra forests and ponds, but the decline is certain to continue to the point of local extinctions. For the first time, the Sierran parks face substantial loss of biological diversity.

Global Climate Change

No sooner has the Park Service gotten a grasp on “natural” and “wild” as appropriate management objectives than they begin to slip from our grasp. The warming and exchange of some winter snow for rain tentatively predicted for the Sierra Nevada will be the most extreme of the four systemic threats described. Alpine species well may be lost entirely, while others variously seek new ground in higher elevations or more northerly latitudes. No doubt many species will not be able to respond quickly enough, or the peculiar combinations of environment they require will not be created elsewhere, or competition from new combinations of species will exclude them. We face the unpalatable alternatives of attempting to manage baskets of species intensively to prevent their loss — giant sequoia itself comes to mind — or accepting the

new, man-made ecosystems that will eventually arise after centuries of turbulence. The terms “alien vs. native” and “wild vs. anthropogenic” lose most of their meaning with human-induced climate change.

It is difficult to find a cheery note on which to close. Certainly research and monitoring to detect and understand ecological changes are accelerating. That means, at very least, the public will be informed of the costs to its parks of continued population and industrial growth. And it means a more symbiotic relation ship with university, agency, and private research organizations which need wilderness research areas and which generate critical management information. The Yellowstone grizzly's brush with extinction that led to the multi-agency management concept of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is setting an example elsewhere.

No doubt, the Park Service in the Sierra increasingly will join forces with the adjacent national forests, BLM lands, and private landholders to look at regionwide research, information systems, and management. This is already underway in the cases of spotted owl, peregrine falcon, and some of the rare furbearers such as fisher and wolverine. As both producer of smoke and victim of air pollution, Sequoia has begun to plan an active role in regional air quality management.

There is little hope that the next century will close with Sierran national parks as wild as they are today, but their ability to provide an understanding of nature to a human race increasingly estranged from its roots, and nourishment to the soul remains.

David M. Graber is a research biologist in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. He spent several years in Yosemite with responsibility for the bear management program.

Yosemite Viewpoints

Letters to the Editor

New Resort/Staging Area for Yosemite?

In his "Continuing the Yosemite Debate," Alfred Runte raises two important issues: the necessity for debate, and the Yosemite Valley Railroad. He would also like to ban alcohol, although its use appears to be a longstanding Yosemite Valley tradition. Shirley Sargent says in her *Yosemite & Its Innkeepers* (p. 16): While all the inns served liquor, Snow's (established 1870) was notably free and easy as testified to by the guests who wrote in the register: "Be sure to try the Snow water," and "No person here obliged to commit burglary to obtain a drink." Thus alcohol is not a recent problem.

I couldn't agree more with Runte about the necessity for debate, be it over park issues or over global environmental issues. And since he is urging debate, I would like to take issue with his second main point, the Yosemite Valley Railroad. While I agree with him that the Grand Canyon Railroad is a good idea, the Yosemite Valley Railroad is not. The route to the rim of the Grand Canyon is not through a oversteepened gorge with a well-documented history of pressure-unloading rockfalls, earthquake-generated rockfalls, and catastrophic floods. (The flood of 1937 helped to undermine the original Yosemite Valley Railroad.) One can almost guarantee minor closures every year for a similar railroad route, and major closures (a month or more) every decade.

Since the '60s I have felt, like Runte, that it is necessary to get the cars out of the valley, both to protect the environment and to discourage rowdy visitors. But one or more railroads leaving from one or more Central Valley cities would make weekend visits prohibitive. Today many visitors drive up Friday afternoons or evenings to arrive at the valley a few hours later. Would one really



NPS PHOTO

expect trains to make hourly runs, days and evenings, seven days a week? And how could we afford a series of multi-train, double-track systems?

Rather, I would like to see a staging area much closer to the park, one built on gentle slopes of Forest Service land between the Chowchilla Mountains ridge and the Wawona area. A resort town built here would be reached from both Mariposa and Oakhurst by an upgraded Highway 459, which mid-way would give rise to a short highway northeast to this site. Funds for road improvements would not be from the depleted coffers of Federal, state, and local governments, but rather from fees and taxes garnered at the resort town built just outside the park. Here, people could stay in campgrounds, R.V. parks, or motels, and take (electric or

Liberating Yosemite Valley has its price.

propane) public buses, these leaving every 15 minutes or less for the valley. Those who wanted to camp in the valley could do so, bringing whatever camping gear they were willing to carry onto the bus.

There is no such thing in the universe as a free meal. Liberating Yosemite Valley has its price. Moving the crowds outside the park would require the construction of a dam and reservoir on the South Fork of the Merced River to provide water and electricity for the town. Hopefully such a project would be on a small scale, since the town could be a model of environmental efficiency by having virtually all its water recycled and by producing most of its electricity from wind turbines and

solar cells on the nearby Chowchilla Mountains.

An additional benefit would be the closure of Highway 140 to all but local traffic. The Merced River would become almost as wild and primitive as it was in the park's earlier days. Also, Wawona and the Mariposa Grove would take on a more primeval aura. Though I would allow cars in these areas, the busting Fresno-Yosemite traffic would be gone. I would also allow vehicles on the Wawona Road north to Yosemite Valley, for the benefit of those travelers heading to Crane Flat and beyond. Crane Flat also would have at least a bus-shuttle service during the snow-free season, but would lack resort facilities. Ultimately, I would like to see traffic on the Tioga Road greatly reduced, but that matter will take a lot of thought.

Jeffrey P. Schaffer

Hercules

For YA's Growth in New Year

I enclose my check for membership in the Yosemite Association. I wanted to write to you about this, in order to register my feeling about the matter. Like other members of the Association, I love Yosemite, and have been a member for many years. However, I've been disturbed by developments this year.

What I mean to say is that I feel Yosemite Association should, above all, stand for strong advocacy of the best interests of the park, and should be its democratically organized and vocal defender. Our voice should be heard, not stifled, and it should not be evaluated equally with the casual replies to Yosemite Park and Curry questionnaires by visitors who may be in the park for the one time in their lives. Such an organization as I envision it can truly be the park's best friend.

I hope that in the coming year, the organization will grow in this direction.

Elizabeth Stone O'Neill
Groveland

Spring Forum Coming Up



NPS PHOTO

Join us on Saturday, March 23 for the YA Spring Forum! During this day long event (formerly called the Spring Open House), YA members have a chance to be involved with the Park in a unique way, listening to a variety of knowledgeable speakers and slide programs not available to the average visitor.

This year's line-up includes a wide assortment of lively topics. Among the speakers will be two Park Service fire specialists who will describe last August's dramatic firestorm that swept through parts of Yosemite and assess its long term impact. Chris Swan, of Suntrain Inc., will talk on his futuristic vision of Yosemite, reshaped by light rail and decreased development. Jay Johnson of the Mariposa Indian Council will speak on the Native American perspective of preservation; and King Huber, of the US Geo-

logic Survey, will do a program interpreting Yosemite geology.

Other programs will look at the Park's resources. A series of experts in each field will describe life in the backcountry and give updates on the bighorn sheep, bears, migratory birds, and other wildlife. Frank Dean, Assistant to the Superintendent, will address Park management issues and answer questions.

The day will begin with registration and coffee from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in front of the East Auditorium which is located just behind the Visitors' Center. There will be programs throughout the day, including walks in the Valley by NPS naturalists. At 5:00 p.m., there will be a wine and cheese gathering.

YA Members have recently received details of the Spring Forum in a separate letter. Materials were included in that mail-

ing to use for reserving a room with the Yosemite Park & Curry Co. Also included in that mailing was a card to return to us if you are planning on attending either the weekend or the day. It will help us with advance planning.

We hope to see you on March 23! Call Gail or Holly, if you have any questions (209-379-2317).

Needed: Yosemite Volunteers

Have some extra time for Yosemite this summer? YA sponsors four different volunteer programs for members which vary in work done, location, and time commitment. All of these programs need sign ups for the coming season.

In Yosemite Valley, from April through October, volunteers run an outdoor membership booth,

YA members are encouraged to come to this year's meeting using whatever form of transportation is available to them.

describing the work of the Association and answering visitor questions, and also staff the NPS Museum Gallery. Volunteers usually spend about a month in the Park, camping in Lower River campground, and working four days a week with a stipend of \$6 per day.

In June, July and August, Tuolumne Meadows is the site for several volunteer programs. One group of volunteers staffs the Tuolumne version of the membership booth just outside the NPS Visitors' Center, while another oversees YA's special use campground for seminar participants. The campground volunteers act as hosts — checking seminar participants in and

SPEAKERS INCLUDE FIRE SPECIALISTS FROM THE PARK SERVICE, CHRIS SWAN OF SUNTRAIN, INC. JAY JOHNSON OF THE MARIPOSA INDIAN COUNCIL AND KING HUBER OF THE US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

answering questions. They work with Park Service and Ticketron personnel and the public. Both sets of volunteers camp in the seminar campground in shared sites, receive the daily stipend, and stay a month or longer.

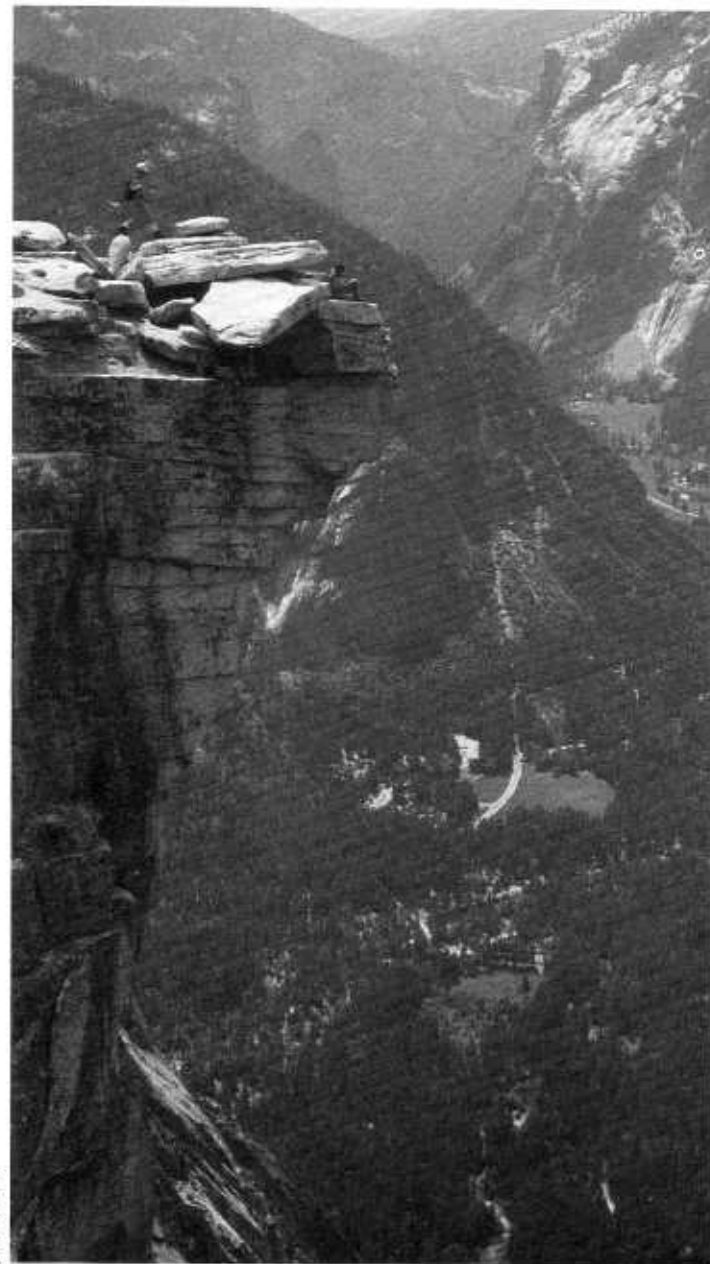
If you'd like to volunteer but don't have a large block of time, then the Member Work Trips may be for you. Each summer several groups of amiable YA folk camp in the special use campground in Tuolumne Meadows and work on projects where the NPS needs assistance. Last summer, groups of 15 volunteers worked primarily in the revegetation project for the Tuolumne area. The work trips are a good combination—YA provides members and food, Yosemite Institute contributes cooks and guides, and the Yosemite Park & Curry Co. gives the much appreciated underwriting which finances it all. The dates for **this summer's work trips are July 13-19, July 27-August 2, and August 17-23.**

If you're interested in any of the volunteer openings, please call Holly or Gail for more information (209-379-2317) or write.

Awards for YA Publications

The Yosemite Association walked away with three of the fifteen first place awards at the 1990 National Park Service Publications Competition in October. The competition was established in 1972 to encourage the production of high-quality publications by cooperating associations.

YA's centennial book, *Yosemite As We Saw It*, by David Robertson, was named the best scholarly book entered. One of the judges commented that it was an "impressive subject impressively handled — jacket, case, artwork, typography, paper, printing." The volume was designed by Desne Border of San Francisco and printed by Meriden-Stinehour



JAY MATHER

Press of Lunenburg, Vermont.

As expected, the Yosemite Association/Sundance Institute joint production of *Yosemite: The Fate of Heaven* received the award for best video. The film has now received several national prizes including an Earthwatch Award from the National Geographic Society. Written and photographed by Jon Else and edited by Michael Chan-

A stomach-churning view from an overhang on Half Dome, from *Yosemite, A Landscape of Life* (see page 17).

dlar, *The Fate of Heaven* was characterized as "a wonderful mix of scenery, history, narrative, personal reminiscences and wildlife." The video was duplicated and packaged by Diner+Allied Video of San Francisco.

Earning long-overdue recognition were the Yosemite Field Seminar catalogs that are produced every year by Penny Otwell. Her Spring, 1990, catalog received first place in the "miscellaneous" category. The judges acknowledged that the catalog presentation "makes you want to take the courses." The winning entry was designed by Carole Thickstun of Cave Creek, Arizona, illustrated by Andie Thrans, and printed by Crown Printing of Fresno using an unusual split font technique.

The award-winners were selected from among nearly 200 entries by a group of seven judges which included Howard Paine, Art Director for National Geographic Magazine, Frances Smyth, Editor-in-Chief of the National Gallery of Art, and Sue Dodge, Editor and Director of Publications for the National Parks and Conservation Association.

Association Dates

March 23, 1991: Spring Forum in Yosemite Valley

July 13-19, 1991: Member Work Trip, Tuolumne Meadows

July 27-August 2, 1991: Member Work Trip, Tuolumne Meadows

August 17-23, 1991: Member Work Trip, Tuolumne Meadows

September 14, 1991: Annual Members' Meeting in Tuolumne Meadows

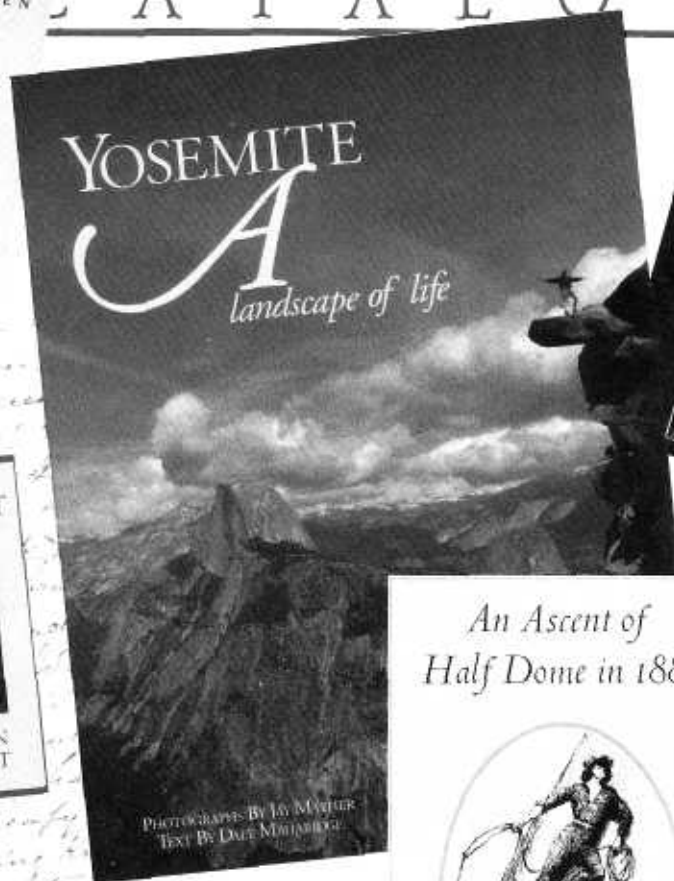
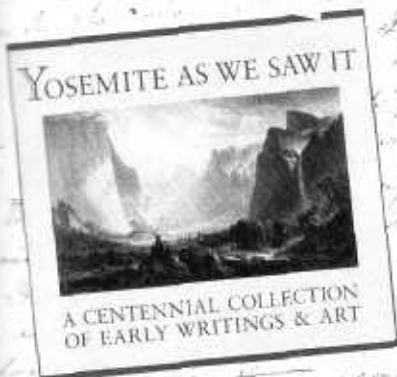
December 1, 1991: Deadline for 1991 Grant Applications

209-379-2317

If you're planning a trip to Yosemite and have questions, give our Members' phone line a call between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. We don't make reservations, but we can give the appropriate phone numbers and usually lots of helpful advice.

Yosemite

CATALOG



An Ascent of Half Dome in 1884



Alexander Plummer Proctor

A *Yosemite: The Fate of Heaven* narrated by Robert Redford. This is an award-winning video cassette produced by the Yosemite Association and Sundance Institute. The documentary takes a look at the many forces at play in Yosemite from the varied perspectives of rockclimbers, trail builders, rangers, visitors, backpackers, visitors and residents. What emerges is a compelling and thought-provoking work with high entertainment value. The color photography is stunning and captures Yosemite's moods in all four seasons. An original musical score adds immeasurably to the film, and all its elements combine to produce a remarkable vision of Yosemite past, present and future. Running time: 58 minutes. #03250 (VHS), #03251 (VHS/PAL): \$19.95.

B *Yosemite As We Saw It—A Centennial Collection of Early Writings and Art* by David Robertson. This is Y.A.'s new centennial book which has already won an

Excellence in Publications Award from the National Park Service. Representative excerpts from the early literature of Yosemite have been paired with beautiful four-color reproductions of art primarily from the Yosemite Museum. Gary Snyder called the book "a splendid compact gathering of passionate views." It elegantly celebrates more than 130 years of American encounter with the Yosemite. 104 pages with 24 color plates. Yosemite Association, 1990. #02435 (clothbound): \$34.95.

C *Yosemite—A Landscape of Life* by Jay Mather and Dale Maharidge. This is the beautiful new, full-color photographic book about people in Yosemite produced jointly by the Sacramento Bee and the Yosemite Association. Published as a handsome paperback that's 9" by 12" and 120 pages long, the work is filled with thought-provoking and revealing photographs giving insight into the life that humans bring to the Yosemite landscape.

Photographer Mather and writer Maharidge are both Pulitzer Prize winners and have created a book that is unique in the literature of the park. #02455 (paper): \$14.95.

D *Nature First—Keeping Our Wild Places and Wild Creatures Wild* by Thomas McNamee. This is a short but compelling call for the development of a national conservation policy. Using Yellowstone and its grizzly bears as examples, the author reviews the state of the environment and makes a number of suggestions for how we, as a nation, can truly protect it. His ideas include a system of National Biosphere Reserves. A thought-provoking work of 54 pages illustrated with line drawings. Roberts Rinehart, 1987. #18156 (paper): \$5.95.

E *An Ascent of Half Dome in 1884* by Alexander Plummer Proctor. Here's a handsomely designed and printed special-edition version of the account of a classic Half Dome climb. After George Anderson made the initial ascent, an avalanche ripped out the pins and ropes he had placed to accomplish his feat. This pamphlet details the unusual climbing techniques and harrowing experiences of the second successful party. Includes an introduction by Francis Farquhar. The 24 pages were printed with hand-set Arrighi type on recycled paper. Hermes Publications, 1979. #06790 (paper): \$2.95.

F *The Practice of the Wild. Essays* by Gary Snyder. Gretel Ehrlich called this book "an exquisite, far-sighted articulation of what freedom, wildness, goodness, and grace mean, using the lessons of the planet to teach us how to live." Essays cover such varying topics as ancient forests, the etiquette of freedom, and bioregional perspectives. Snyder's writings are characterized by humor, perception and love. 190 pages. North Point Press, 1990. #19870 (paper): \$10.95.



Yosemite
Association



G *Yosemite Association Mug.* This distinctive and functional heavy ceramic mug feels good with your hand wrapped around it. Available in two colors (green and maroon), it's imprinted with our logo and name in black and white. Holds 12 ounces of your favorite beverage. #03310, \$6.50.

G



H *Yosemite Enamel Pin.* Designed especially for the Association, our enameled 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 7/8" x 2" size. #03380, \$11.95.

I

I *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

I



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 2 1/2 inches. #03370, \$11.95.

J *Yosemite Association Decals and Patches.* Our Association logo depicting Half Dome is offered to our members in these two useful forms. Help announce your affiliation with our organization to others by purchasing and using Yosemite Association patches and decals. Patch #03315, \$1.50; Decal #03317, \$1.00.

Dates for 1991 Summer/Fall Seminars

Animal Ecology, Aug 2-4; **Rock & Ice Backpack / Geology**, Aug 12-16; **Streamside Ecology**, Aug 9-11; **Life at the Top**, July 22-26; **Natural History Introduction**, July 28-Aug 2; **Grasses & Sedges**, July 15-19; **Sharsmith Walk**, July 6 & Aug 3; **Forests of Yosemite**, Aug 11-17; **Subalpine Botany**, July 15-19; **Yosemite Meadows**, July 22-26; **Botti Plant Diversity**, July 12-23; **Stars**, Aug 4-8; **Stars**, Aug 11-15; **Bird Banding**, Aug 9-11; **Archeology Backpack**, Sept 13-16; **Teaching About Calif. Indians**, Aug 17-19; **Nature Study for Elementary Teachers**, July 29-Aug 2; **Burley-Munson-Boyers Backpack**, Aug 18-24; **Vogelsang Beginning Backpack**, July 26-28; **Yosemite Creek Beginning Backpack**, July 26-28; **Young Lakes Backpack**, Sept 21-23; **Glacier Pt.-Wawona Backpack**, Oct 11-14; **Buena Vista Backpack**, July 17-21; **North Dome Skywalk**, Aug 11-12 & Aug 12-13; **Women's Beginning Backpack**, July 5-7 & July 19-21; **Women's Intermediate Backpack**, Aug 2-4 & Sept 6-9; **Eastside Day Hikes**, Oct 26-27; **Black & White Photo Backpack**, July 23-27; **Secret Yosemite Photography**, Oct 18-20; **Lundy Lake Photo Backpack**, July 19-21; **Tuolumne Flowers**, July 27-28; **Fall Photo-Yosemite Valley**, Oct 25-27; **Wildlife Photography**, Oct 19-21; **Neill/Nicholas Tuolumne Photo**, July 8-11; **Kudo Watercolor Workshop**, Aug 22 (eve)-26; **Stasek Colored Pencil**, July 18 (eve)-22; **Eifert Acrylic Painting**, July 18 (eve)-22; **Literary Naturalists**, Aug 3 (eve)-6; **Family Backpack-DeWitts**, Aug 16-18; **Young Children Family Backpack**, Aug 9-11; **Fishing With Children**, Aug 24-25.

*Course offered for college credit

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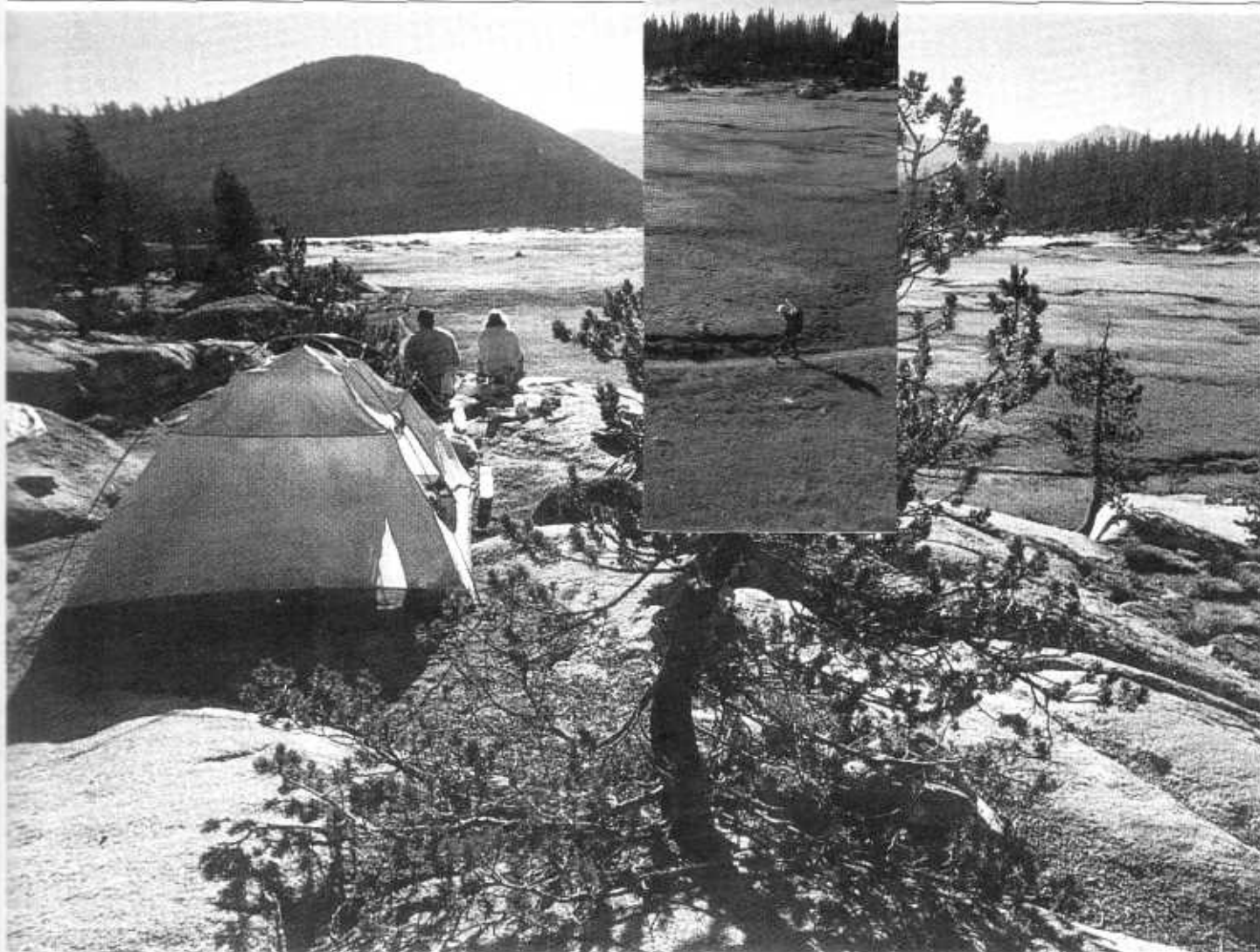
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Jon Else Wins Emmy Award

Jon Else, writer and photographer for the Yosemite Association produced *Yosemite: The Fate of Heaven*, was recognized for his work on that film when he was named Best Director of a Documentary at the 1990 Emmy Awards. Else, who is also a MacArthur Foundation fellowship winner, is known for his creative documentary style and thoughtful treatment of complex issues.



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

Mary Ann Amemiya & Don Vinson, David R. Anderson, Kimberly Barrett, J. Cremer & A. Batmale, Jim & Anna Berghauer, Bob Berka, Bruce Boaz, Beverly Brockway, Georgette Brydon, Patricia Cage, T & A Christianson, Andy Cohen, Kip & Lynn Cohen, Gail Cooper, Lucy & Bill Crain, V. Kehoe & L. Dapprich, Burt Davis, Tony DeMaio, Thayer Dennis, Clyde T. Dohoney, Linda Dolman, Fritz L. Dorroh, Kim Dunkley, Kent Edwards, Judith Ehret, Marilyn Eichelberger, Katy Emde, John & Nancy Everett, Virla & Herbert Ferguson, Ruth Fischbacher, Susan & Jim Fousekis, Harold J. Fraulob, I. Bright & J. Fredericks, Donald Fuhrer, Katherine A. Giocondi, Barbara Grosz, Amy Grush, Thomas J. Gunn, Howard Gurevitz, Charles & Ginger Guthrie, Mr & Mrs Richard Haber, Daniel S. Haines, Diana Hall, Diane E. Hall, Ian Paul Halliwell, Shawn Curtis Harris, Mike Hartfield, Arthur W. Haseltine, Hugh & Terry Haven,

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Louise Stone, Dale Swanberg, V. Cicerich & W. Thomas, Audrey Thoreson, George & Marilyn Trabert, William Turner, W. Brew & J. Volk-Brew, Thomas P. Walters, Joseph H. Wheelbarger, Connie White, William P. White, Mrs Doris M. Williams, Karen Witter, David M. Wyman, A. A. Zall

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Enjoying the sun at Sunrise High Sierra Camp, where annual use has remained consistent, or flat, for a decade. *From Yosemite, A Landscape of Life* by Mather and Maharidge.

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Linda L. Avakian, M. B. Davis, M. Bianchi-Gray & R. Gray, Tanya Hildebrand, Nan S. Hutain, Roxie Jarrett, Sally & Louis Lewis, Robt & Nancy Maynard, Reed E. Miller, MD, Carolyn M. Owen, James D. Pardee, Bob & Dorothee Paterson, Ray & Sally Purinton, Heike Reece, Mr & Mrs Chas. Reynolds, Alan L. Rossi, T. Lurgi/Ticketron, Clyde Wahrhaftig, Vicki Warner-Huggins

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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 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:

- ☆ *Yosemite*, the Association bulletin, published on a quarterly basis;
- ☆ A 15% discount on all books, maps, posters, calendars and publications stocked for sale by the Association;
- ☆ A 10% discount on most of the field seminars conducted by the Association in Yosemite National Park;
- ☆ The opportunity to participate in the annual Members' Meeting held in the park each fall, along with other Association activities;

☆ A Yosemite Association decal; and

☆ Special membership gifts as follows:

Supporting Member: A selection of 8 handsome notecards (with envelopes) featuring beautiful photographs of Yosemite;

Contributing Member: A Yosemite Association mug — new design;

Sustaining Member: A copy of the award-winning video, *Yosemite: The Fate of Heaven*;

Life Member: Matted color photograph by Howard Weamer of a Yosemite scene; and

Participating Life Member: Ansel Adams Special Edition print, archivally mounted.

Membership dues are tax-deductible as provided by law.

Yosemite Association

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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

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