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 YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Subject Tenaya Lake Area Plan Sierra Club Public Scoping
 Comment

Dear Sir:

Attached is the official Sierra Club public comment on the Tenaya Lake Area Plan.

Joe Fontaine, Chair, Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee.



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Public comment
Tenaya Lake Area Plan
Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95398

17 October 08

The following comments are submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee. We hope they will be of value in protecting and improving the natural qualities of the Tenaya Lake area.

The NPS proposal to reduce visitor impacts, relocate and upgrade problematic restrooms, reroute social trails impacting sensitive resource areas, and other restoration efforts to mitigate visitor impacts are actions the Committee encourage and support.

Issues remain regarding vehicles and camping at Tenaya.

Haphazard parking along Tioga road needs to be significantly reduced or eliminated. Especially problematic are day use vehicles, including large tour buses, continuously parked along the eastern shoreline where they present an unacceptable impact to the view shed quality of the entire area. This is perhaps the most serious problem impacting the environmental quality at Tenaya. Some day use parking could be relocated into Lodgepole tree cover in limited areas outside the congressionally designated wilderness boundary along the Tioga road. For example there might be some opportunity in this restricted area near the Sunrise trail head parking lot north of Tioga road, and there may be some others. There is NOT sufficient space available in the area to accommodate the numbers of vehicles that currently park along Tioga road. This reality will require initiating increased scheduled shuttle service from Tuolumne and Valley locations and perhaps reducing the present level of day use at Tenaya Lake. The Tenaya Lake view shed is one of the most impressive in the entire Park. Unpopular measures including reducing private vehicle access may be required to protect it from the sullyng impacts these vehicles present to the stunning scenic quality of the Tenaya Lake area. Significant improvements to the environmental quality at Tenaya will not be met if the numbers of vehicles are not substantially reduced from current levels.

Reestablishing decommissioned walk in campsites at Tenaya is a controversial parking related issue. Approximately 50 walk in campsites located near the west end of the lake were decommissioned in the 1990's. They were located in or very near environmentally sensitive wetland areas, were very close to the lake and in direct view of one of Yosemite's most famous view sheds, the one looking east from Olmstead point. The Committee would strongly oppose reestablishing camping at this site. There could be some opportunity for a limited number of walk in campsites in Lodgepole cover at the

east end of the lake near existing parking and restroom amenities but locating walk in campsites there presents problems as well. Reestablishing camping at Tenaya as called for in the 1980 GMP would exacerbate the already very difficult if not impossible parking problem at Tenaya and expands a visitor activity where none now exists. A preferred alternative might be to increase walk in campsites at Tuolumne and provide scheduled shuttle service for day use picnicking, hiking and other activities at Tenaya and the surrounding area. This may be a more practical and appropriate way to provide additional walk in camping opportunities in Yosemite while avoiding complicating an almost impossible day use parking problem at Tenaya.

We are looking forward to working with your excellent staff and planning team in resolving some of these difficult problems at Tenaya and along the Tioga road corridor.

Thanks for listening.

Joe Fontaine, Chair, Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee