



Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center
 Box 396 • Twain Harte, CA 95383 • (209) 586-7440 • FAX (209) 586-4986
 Visit our website at: www.cserc.org or contact us at: johnb@cserc.org

RECEIVED
 TEN-5-
 NOV - 3 2008

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

October 17, 2008

Superintendent
 PO Box 577
 Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Superintendent:

These comments are in response to the notification of the inception of a Tenaya Lake Area Plan. Our Center submits the following preliminary comments regarding our concern for this sensitive area.

Our Center agrees with park staff that the current parking situation for Tenaya Lake visitors can be dangerous with cars parked along Hwy 120 adjacent to traffic moving at 35 to 50 mph or more. We agree that remediation is needed for this parking-public safety issue, although we do not believe that expanding parking lots will necessarily solve larger visitor capacity issues tied to such concentrated use at Tenaya Lake on busy weekends or during peak summer visitation periods.

At this early stage in the planning process, we question where appropriate expanded parking could be located due to environmental constraints at the lake. Directly east of the lake lies sensitive marshy, riparian habitat that remains wet throughout the summer. This riparian corridor stretches from the current parking area by the toilets all the way to the base of the granite cliffs. Avoiding this riparian habitat and associated marshy areas may preclude any new development of a parking area or other facilities that might otherwise be located to the east of the lake. Rather than paving over sensitive riparian and wetland habitat, our Center hopes that the Park will take steps to solve parking problems by reducing traffic congestion and increasing shuttle bus use, or by creating other appropriate attractive locations along the Highway where visitors can stop without overwhelming the natural resources.

Our Center supports this plan's goal of reducing impacts to natural resources through better signage of trails and amenities. We also support any effort to protect water quality of this pristine, high-altitude lake that could be contaminated through improper disposal of human waste. Obviously, Tenaya Lake is a key destination along the Tioga Pass route. It serves as a scenic icon that grabs visitors' attention and inspires them to pull over to take photos or to stop for an extended visit. It would seem ideal if the parking layout and overall design for visitor facilities at this site could discourage high

	1	L	M					
RT	#S	LT	DT	UT	IA	IR	OR	TS

TEN-S-25
Pg 2 of 2

levels of parking along the shoreline portion of the Lake next to the highway, and instead control the number of visitors at one time by directing visitors to parking nodes or lots. Those lots should be sized to compliment capacity use targets chosen by the Park to ensure adequate protection for ecosystem values.

As with any plan that has potential to affect an area that is highly popular with many people, there will likely be comments that urge the Park to keep things generally as they are today. On the contrary, our Center urges that the Park take advantage of this unique opportunity to prioritize ecological sustainability as the key to management at this scenic site, and to limit visitation, parking, and development of facilities to the level that can be allowed without causing environmental degradation.

Please notify our Center of any further opportunities to comment on this plan, including the release of the Draft EA. We would also be interested in attending any public field sessions that may be scheduled.

Thank you for considering our comments,



Brenda Whited, Staff Biologist