



## Merced River Plan Alternatives Development

In 1987 Congress determined that the Merced River was truly a remarkable and special river worthy of designation as a Wild and Scenic River. This designation recognizes the natural character, free flowing conditions, and unique features of the river; provides an additional layer of legal protection; and requires a management plan to protect and enhance river values. The National Park Service is developing, in consultation with tribes and participation from stakeholders, a comprehensive management plan to guide the care and protection of the Merced River and the South Fork of the Merced River for the next 15–20 years.

### What are the goals of the Merced River Plan?

The overall goal of the Merced River Plan is to protect and enhance the values for which the river was designated wild and scenic, leaving the river unimpaired for future generations. More specifically, the goals of this plan are to:

- Promote the river’s ability to shape the landscape, reducing impediments to free-flow, improving geologic/hydrologic processes, restoring flood-plains and meadows, and protecting water quality.
- Support opportunities for people to experience and develop direct connections to the Merced and its unique values as a place of cultural

association, education, recreation, reflection and inspiration.

- Institute a visitor-use management program that balances the provision of high-quality, resource-related recreational visitor use opportunities in the river corridor with the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural river values today and into the future.
- Provide clear direction on land uses and associated developments in the river corridor, allowing for the infrastructure necessary to support the protection and enhancement of river values.

### What will the plan do?

The plan will protect river values, address user capacity, and address the development of lands and facilities in the river corridor. Any management action taken to achieve these goals may have consequences on how visitors experience the park, park operations, or other resources. These consequences may require us to develop related management actions. For example, if we elect to relocate a facility outside of

the river corridor, we must identify where it will go and that the new location is appropriate.

In addition to these required and related actions, we heard through scoping that the public is interested in additional opportunities to improve the visitor experience, such as increased camping availability and expanded boating access. We will address these opportunities where appropriate and feasible in this plan.

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## Where are we in the planning process?

Throughout the development of the Merced River Plan we have checked in with you to let you know where we are in the process, to share what we've learned, and to get your ideas. In the Spring 2011, Merced River Plan Workshops and Science Forum, we shared with you what we were learning about the condition of the river and its Outstandingly Remarkable Values. Since then we've been working on developing some options for addressing the concerns identified through the *Draft Baseline Condition Report*

and public comment. We are identifying some of the most significant issues to share with you this fall through a series of Fall Workshops and a workbook. These Fall Workshops will be an opportunity to let us know what you think of the options we've identified and help us start combining these options into feasible alternatives. This will also be an opportunity to explore the trade-offs inherent in packaging alternatives.

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## What are alternatives?

While sometimes the path is clear, there is often more than one way to achieve a goal. The Merced River Plan must explore and propose a reasonable and feasible range of ways to achieve the plan goals. In planning, alternatives are a grouping of management options that are often organized around a theme such as restoration or river access. All alternatives will involve a series of trade-offs, for example we can't restore an area to natural conditions and add camping or parking in the same spot. These alternatives

form the core of the river plan and are analyzed in the environmental impact statement. One of the alternatives identified will be selected as a preferred alternative. The draft environmental impact statement and the preferred alternative will be posted for review by American Indian consulting partners and the public.

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## What are the opportunities to get involved?

We invite you to join us at one of the MRP Fall Workshops. We look forward to sharing with you some of the management considerations and options to address them that our planning team has identified. In addition to the workshops we are producing a companion workbook that we will release in advance. These workshops will be an opportunity to help us start combining these options into feasible alternatives.

### Merced River Plan Fall Workshops

Date	Time	Location
Oct. 27, 2011	5-8 pm	<i>El Portal Community Center</i> El Portal, California
Oct. 28, 2011	1-5 pm	<i>Wawona Community Center</i> Wawona, California
Oct. 29, 2011	10 am – 4 pm	<i>Garden Terrace, Yosemite Lodge</i> Yosemite National Park
Nov. 7, 2011	10 am – 4 pm	<i>Garden Terrace, Yosemite Lodge</i> Yosemite National Park
Nov. 9, 2011	5-8 pm	<i>The Palm Room, San Francisco Film Centre</i> San Francisco, California *For directions to this meeting location, visit: <a href="http://www.sffilmcentre.com">http://www.sffilmcentre.com</a>

For more information about the Merced River Plan visit [www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/mrp.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/mrp.htm).