



## Scenic Vista Management Plan

### Managing Vistas

Yosemite National Park was originally set aside for preservation due to its outstanding scenery. In 1851, Dr. Lafayette Bunnell, one of the first Europeans to gaze on Yosemite's beauty, described the supreme grandeur of Yosemite Valley:

"...the clouds...partially dimmed the higher cliffs and mountains. This obscurity of vision but increased the awe with which I beheld it, and as I looked, a peculiar exalted sensation seemed to fill my whole being."

Millions of modern-day explorers have experienced this same view. Today, we call it Tunnel View. It's just one of many iconic views and vistas for which Yosemite is famous.



The view of El Capitan, Bridalveil Fall, and Half Dome, as one exits the Tunnel on the Wawona Road, has captured the awe of visitors for over 75 years. Over time trees and brush began to obscure that view, so in October 2008 the Tunnel View Rehabilitation Project was completed to restore the expansive views of Yosemite Valley.

### Purpose of the Plan

The Scenic Vista Management Plan will create a program that will:

- Replace the Park's current ad hoc approach to scenic vista management with a comprehensive strategy.
- Prioritize viewpoints for management.
- Identify which methods of vegetation clearing are appropriate; when and where to use them.
- For high priority vistas, describe what trees and brush may need to be removed to restore the view.

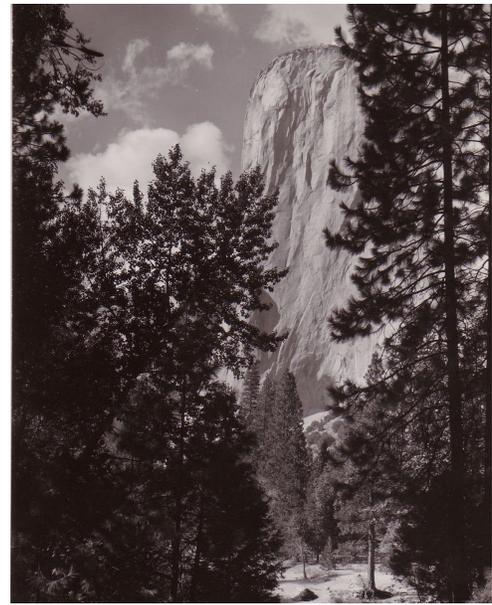
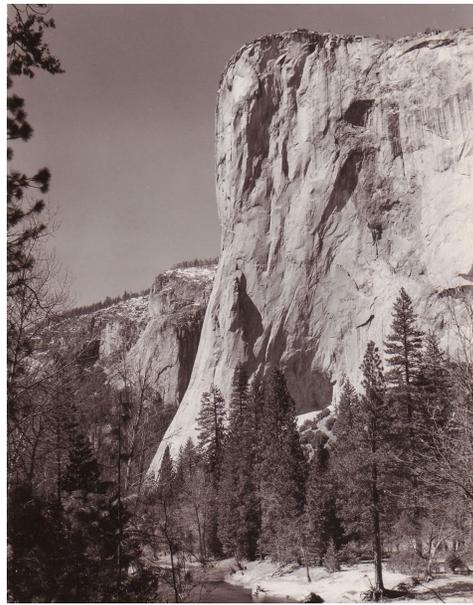
### Is a Plan Needed?



The creation of this plan is called for by the 1980 Yosemite General Management Plan and activities of this type are specifically allowed for by the National Park Service Organic Act. Past management practices have allowed vegetation growth to adversely impact the park's iconic views and vistas, discrete lines of sight, and meadow systems. This has impacted both natural and cultural resources in Yosemite as well as compromising the visitor experience. The National Park Service wants to identify appropriate management actions to respond to these impacts.

Protection of the Park's historic viewsheds requires an understanding of the current status of these systems. A framework will be developed for evaluating and prioritizing research needs and management actions that may be necessary to ensure that park resources and values remain unimpaired.

## Does maintenance of scenic vistas make a difference?



The photo on the right was prior to selective thinning that was done in the early 1900s to preserve one of the most popular views in the Valley. Following the thinning the view of El Capitan on the left was selected to represent Yosemite in the Postage Stamp Series.

## What methods could be proposed?

- **Fire** - the practice of fire exclusion by early settlers in the late 1800s was continued by park managers for decades, resulting in dense stands of vegetation. In the 1970s, the positive aspects of fire were recognized and limited prescribed burns were introduced. This helped restore some of the original meadows, reinvigorate giant sequoia groves, and otherwise enhance forest health.
- **Mechanical** - thinning or removing trees and brush could restore Yosemite Valley to its original oak woodland setting and re-establish historic viewpoints.
- **Trimming** - trees and shrubs could be trimmed to remove individual branches and stems that block views.

## How can I participate?

Public participation is essential for the success of this and all other park improvement projects. Here are some ways to stay involved in this project and its planning process:

- **Provide input during the public scoping period** beginning February 12, 2009 and ending March 20, 2009. Scoping allows anyone to make comments & suggestions on a proposed plan or project. You can participate by:
  - Mailing, faxing, or emailing your comments to the address listed below, or
  - Attend one of two Public Open Houses being held at the Auditorium in Yosemite Valley from 1:00-4:00pm on **Wednesday, January 28, 2009 & February 25**. The park entrance fee will be waived if attending.
- **Add your name to the park's planning list** and receive the *Planning Update* news letter as well as other planning-related notices. You can also submit your email address to receive the park's periodic electronic newsletter.
- **Attend a public site visit** to be held summer 2009.
- **Review and provide comments on the Environmental Assessment** during the public review period.
- **Mail:** Superintendent  
Attn: Scenic Vista Management Plan  
P.O. Box 577  
Yosemite, CA 95389
- **Phone:** 209/379-1365; Fax: 209/379-1294
- **E-mail:** [Yose\\_Planning@nps.gov](mailto:Yose_Planning@nps.gov)
- **Visit online:** [www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/vista.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/vista.htm).
- A new way to submit comments is available online. It's called **PEPC (Planning, Environment, and Public Comment)**. Access the site at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/yose>