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## Places

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# The 1980 General Management Plan

*In 1980, the National Park Service issued the Yosemite General Management Plan, which guided Park policies for visitor use, park operations and development for the next decade. Following are excerpts:*

There are two purposes for Yosemite National Park. The first is preservation of the resources that contribute to Yosemite's uniqueness and attractiveness . . . The second . . . is to make the varied resources of Yosemite available to people for their individual enjoyment, education and recreation . . .

Today, the Valley is congested with more than a thousand buildings...[and] bisected by approximately 30 miles of roads, which accommodate a million cars, trucks and buses a year . . .

The foremost responsibility of the National Park Service (NPS) is to perpetuate the natural splendor of Yosemite . . . The intent of the NPS is to remove all automobiles from Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove and to redirect development to the periphery of the Park and beyond. Similarly, the essence of wilderness, which so strongly complements the Valley, will be preserved. The result will be that visitors can step into Yosemite and find nature uncluttered by piecemeal stumbling blocks of commercialism, machines and fragments of suburbia . . .

## **Reclaim Priceless Natural Beauty**

Outstanding natural areas that have been developed for uses such as staff housing, office space, warehousing, a

golf course and a beauty shop will be reclaimed. Facilities in the Valley that do not relate directly to enjoyment of the Park, including the headquarters of the NPS and the Yosemite Park and Curry Company, will be relocated outside the Park. Visitor facilities in Yosemite Valley, Tuolumne Meadows and Mariposa Grove that are intrusive or cause environmental damage will be removed or relocated to more resilient environments . . .

## **Markedly Reduce Traffic Congestion**

Increasing automobile traffic is the single greatest threat to enjoyment of the natural and scenic qualities of Yosemite. In the near future, automobile congestion will be greatly reduced by restricting people's use of their cars and increasing public transportation.

The ultimate goal of the NPS is to remove all private vehicles from Yosemite Valley. The Valley must be freed from the noise, the smell, the glare and the environmental degradation caused by thousands of vehicles.

## **Allow Natural Processes to Prevail**

The primary objective . . . will be to restore and perpetuate the natural processes of the Park's ecosystems. The Yosemite environment is not a static accumulation of geologic and biologic features but rather a dynamic system of interrelated and evolving forms. Therefore, if this environment is to be preserved, the natural processes that are occurring there must be understood and allowed to prevail.

In developed areas like the Valley, facilities will be removed from floodplaning and geologic hazard areas in deference to these natural phenomena, and the natural role of fire in vegetative communities will be simulated with

controlled burns or mechanical removal of vegetation. In areas that have been disturbed by man's activity, natural processes will be allowed to restore the scene.

## **Reduce Crowding**

Opportunities to enjoy the Park will be reoriented to ensure that overcrowding does not interfere with visitor enjoyment or threaten park values. Appropriate visitor levels have been established . . . and facilities such as day parking and overnight accommodations will be based on these levels. As visitors approach and enter the Park, they will find information stations with reservation services to direct them to available facilities. Greater opportunities for year-round use will allow visitors to enjoy Yosemite at different times of the year.

## **Promote Visitor Understanding and Enjoyment**

The amount and kinds of information and interpretive programs available to visitors will be greatly increased.

Information about Park programs and services will be broadcast through the news media and made available . . . in the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas and at information stations along roads leading to the Park . . .

Natural history and historical collections will be on display . . . Audio-visual programs will help visitors to understand the processes and events that shaped Yosemite's natural features and the relationship of our cultural values to preservation of the Park.

The intent of these expanded and improved visitor programs is to help ensure that a visit to Yosemite becomes a lifetime treasure . . .