



# YOSEMITE FLOOD '97



A SPECIAL EDITION OF THE YOSEMITE GUIDE

SPRING 1997  
VOLUME XXVI, NO.1

## The Flood of the Century



*Sierra winter storms are likely to be remembered more by the bridges and houses they carry away than by their beauty or the thousands of blessings they bring to the fields and gardens of Nature.*

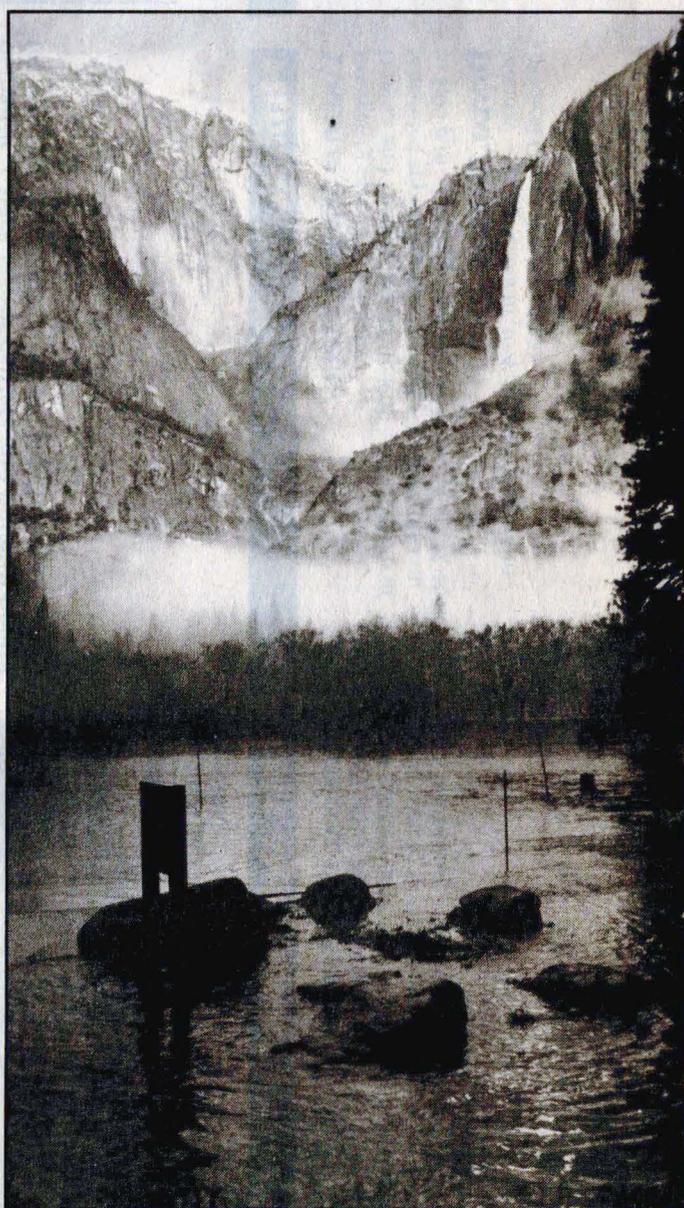
– John Muir  
from his first book,  
**The Mountains of California**  
(1894)

While January's flood brought record-setting water levels to Yosemite, flooding in Yosemite Valley and

along the Merced River Canyon is as old as the river itself. The tendency of the Merced River to flood was almost immediately recognized when James Lamon, the first non-Indian to live permanently in Yosemite Valley, was driven from his home in 1862 by the rising river. But while floods can wreak havoc

with human structures, they are extremely beneficial from an ecological standpoint, serving as a sort of natural house-cleaning which scours and alters stream and river channels, redistributes rock, soil, silt, and sand, while enriching wildlife habitat.

*Continued on page 1*



Yosemite Falls roar while the rising Merced River transforms meadows into lakes during January's flood. NPS photo



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# YOSEMITE FLOOD '97

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## The Flood of the Century



In the Flood of 1997, the river reached a depth of over 13 feet at the Happy Isles gaging station and swelled to over 23 feet by the time it reached Pohono Bridge at the Valley's far western end. NPS Photo

Continued from front cover

### WHAT HAPPENED?

Two and a half days of warm and heavy rain brought great change to Yosemite National Park during the first few days of 1997. In the early morning hours of New Year's Day, rain was falling at elevations as high as 9,500 feet. In the high country, rivulets in the snowpack indicate a snow line that eventually climbed to 12,000 feet. The deluge of this storm, along with a record-setting snowfall in December that was melted by this rain, created a high volume of water rarely seen in the rivers and waterfalls of Yosemite. Witnesses saw Royal Arches

Cascades—normally a relatively narrow stream of water—expand to 350 feet across. Yosemite Falls was a raging gush, causing the meandering Yosemite Creek to flow over roadways and bridges.

Peaking in Yosemite Valley at about 11:00 p.m. on the night of January 2nd, the massive volume of water flowed down-stream, causing streams and rivers to overflow their banks and carve new channels. Initially, 900 visitors and 1,200 park employees were isolated in Yosemite Valley when all three highways into the Valley were closed. After the water subsided, downed trees were removed and initial repairs were made to Highway 41 sufficient to allow the evacuation of visitors and many employees from Yosemite Valley.

### EVIDENCE OF THE AFTERMATH

Despite the severity of this natural event, visitors to Yosemite may be surprised at how little of the flood's evidence remains. What you may see is that riverbanks look freshly scoured and widened, debris along high-water lines dangles in the trees and shrubs next to the

river, and the shoulders of many park roads are eroded. These changes are part of the natural cycle of events that created and continue to shape areas within Yosemite.

What you won't see is the major "damage" experienced by the park's infrastructure. Many of the human-made systems required to support visitors sustained crippling blows. Electrical supply systems shut down. Water-soaked hillsides slid onto roads and power poles were toppled. Sewer lines broke, causing contamination of the water supply. Campgrounds, buildings, and roads close to the river's edge were flooded. Some sections of roads were completely washed away; in other cases, the surge of flood water undermined the roadbed, leaving asphalt hanging in mid-air. Sandbars and debris covered roads and paths throughout the Valley.

### THE WORK BEGINS

Much of the park was closed to the public in January and February as a result of this storm. The NPS is working with the assistance of many other federal, state, and local agencies to assess damages to park roads, trails, buildings, grounds, and park utility systems. Emergency repairs, salvage operations and long-term planning for park restoration are underway. This represents the beginning of a recovery effort that will leave Yosemite better than before—better for park resources and better for visitors.

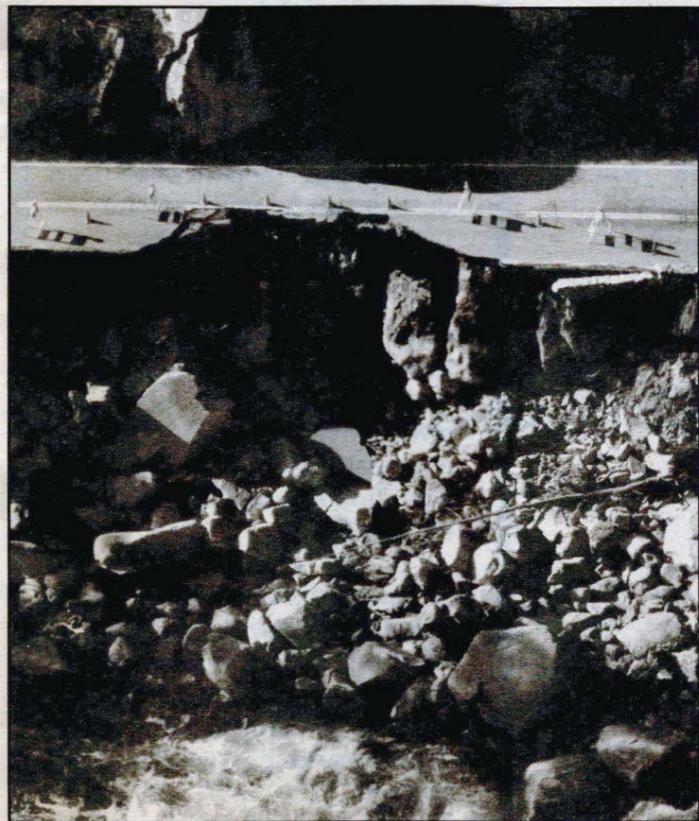
### THE FLOOD'S ECOLOGICAL ROLE

The Flood of '97 reflects the Merced River's dominant role in forming the character and ecology of Yosemite Valley. Consequently, accurate surveys and documentation of this event are underway.

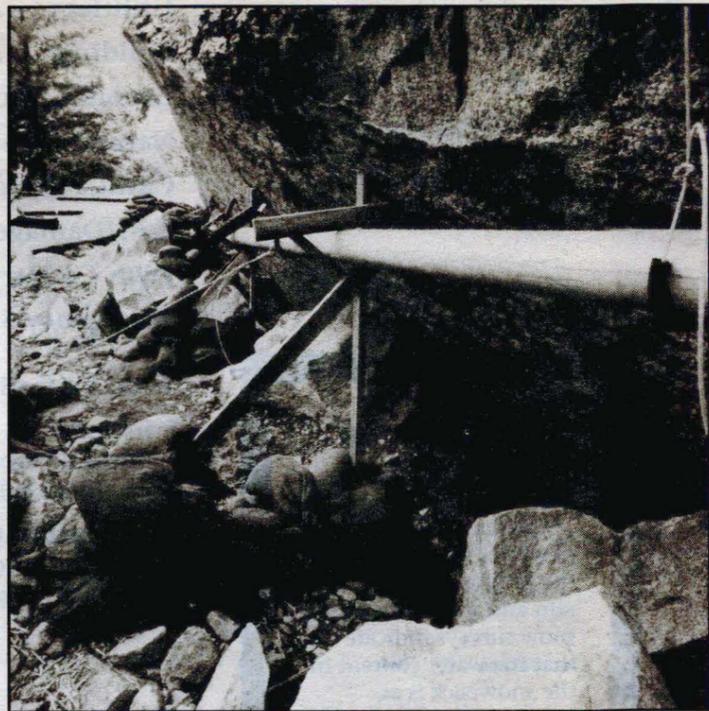
Aerial photographs, hydrological assessments and floodplain data are being collected. This information will aid park managers in their understanding of the dynamics of flooding, the beneficial role floods play in the ecosystem, and the effects of human intervention on the channeling of the Merced River in the Valley.

*Strange to say, the greatest floods occur in winter, when one would suppose all the wild waters would be muffled and chained in frost and snow. But at rare intervals, warm rains and warm winds invade the mountains and push back the snow line from 2,000 feet to 8,000, or even higher, and then come the big floods.*

— John Muir,  
**The Mountains of California**



A 7.5 mile stretch of Highway 140 sustained severe damage. In several places, the road and underlying supporting ground layers are gone. NPS photo



A 300-foot section of 14-inch sewer line located beneath Highway 140 was destroyed, severing the Yosemite Valley sewer system from the El Portal waste water treatment plant. The sewer line must be reconstructed. NPS photo

## YOSEMITE GUIDE

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# FLOOD FACTS

## Did You Know...

### POST-FLOOD PRECAUTIONS

Reconstruction of roadways and structures continues throughout Yosemite. Do not drive or walk through any closed, barricaded, or roped-off areas. Motor vehicles must stay on established roads open to public travel. Obey all posted speed limit and direction of travel signs.

Saturated soils and the high winds that accompanied the flood have weakened and undermined a large number of trees in developed areas. While extensive survey and hazard tree removal is currently underway, be aware that conditions under and around trees are unstable.

The banks along the Merced River and other creekside areas sustained heavy erosion and undercutting due to flooding. Be careful when walking along any creek or river bank.

Swift currents and wet, slippery footing can cause you to fall and be swept over a waterfall. Never swim or wade in streams above waterfalls or in swiftly moving water.

Watch your step! Tripping and falling are common accidents on park walkways and trails, especially in icy or slippery conditions.

### WINTER IS NOT OVER

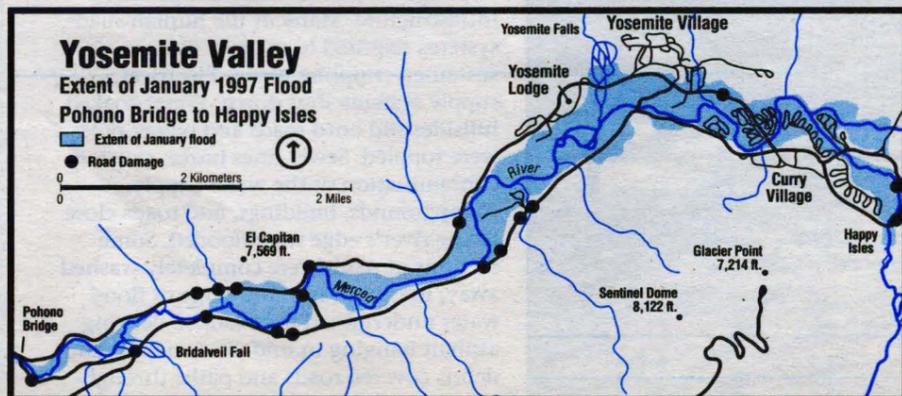
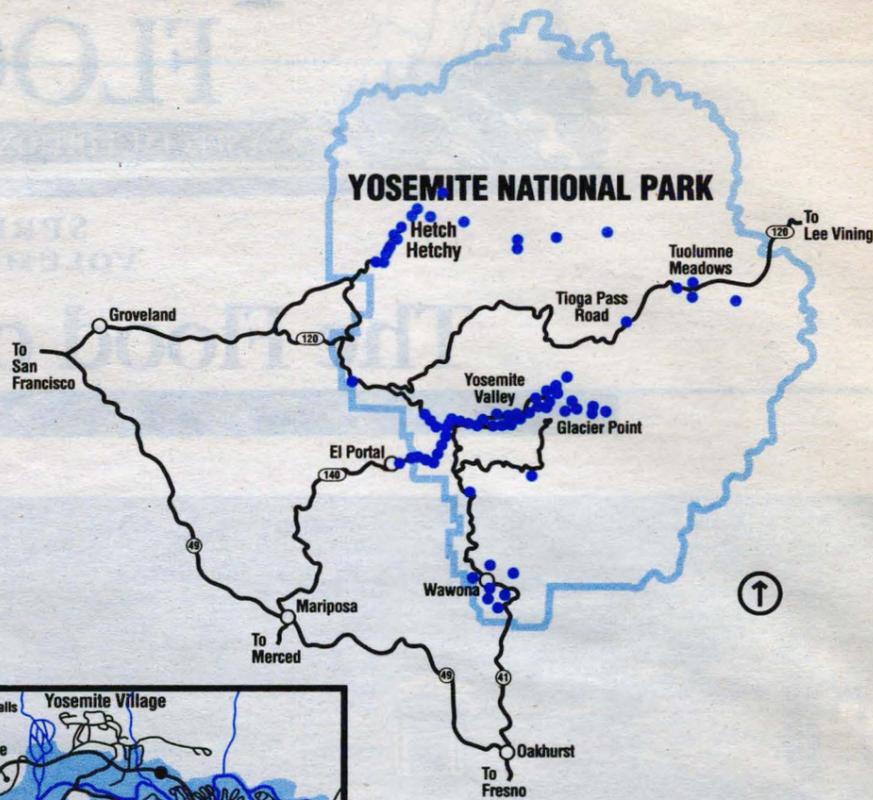
The remaining weeks of winter weather hold the promise of additional rain and snow. The latest snow surveys indicate that the water content in the snowpack is at approximately 200% of normal. The potential for serious spring flooding still exists.

### KNOWN LOCATIONS OF MAJOR FLOOD DAMAGE

Areas of known flood damage are marked with a dot.

The Tioga Pass Road is above 6,000 feet in elevation and currently covered with snow. Additional flood damage will likely be discovered after spring snowmelt allows for a more extensive survey of the park.

As shown on the map below, many of the park's visitor facilities were inundated by flood water.



### PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT TOTALS

CATEGORY	RECOVERY ESTIMATE
Roads	\$36,304,000
Trails	4,264,000
Utilities	6,160,000
Buildings	84,083,000
Grounds (includes campgrounds)	13,112,000
Natural Resources	4,277,000
Cultural Resources	709,000
Lost/Damaged Property	2,830,000
High Country Estimate*	12,912,000
Emergency Short-Term Incident Response	13,402,000
<b>Total Preliminary Recovery Estimate**</b>	<b>178,053,000</b>

\* Includes all roads, trails, buildings, utilities, cultural and natural resource preservation above 6,000 feet - to be finalized July 1997.

\*\* The estimate includes concession-operated, park-owned lodging and housing which was flood damaged and should be relocated.

### FLOOD VIDEO NOW AVAILABLE

A seven-minute video featuring impressive footage of the Merced River at flood stage is now available from the Yosemite Association. Produced by the National Park Service, the film provides a glimpse of the flood's impact and the river's awesome power. This VHS cassette is priced at \$6.00 and can be



purchased at the Valley Visitor Center. It can also be ordered by phoning 209/379-2648 (California residents should add sales tax; shipping is \$4.00), or by mail from the Yosemite Association, P.O. Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318.

### SOME FLOOD SPECIFICS

- At least 1.4 miles of riverbank and 550 acres of meadows (recently restored at a cost of \$1 million) were eroded by the flooding Merced River in Yosemite Valley. Losses in these areas also include 3.5 miles of resource protection fencing and 170 restoration signs that must be replaced.
- Approximately half of Yosemite Valley's 900 campsites were flooded. Hundreds of picnic tables, bear-proof food storage lockers, waste cans, and fire grates were washed down river and destroyed. Paved campground roads and sites were destroyed or covered with over a foot of silt.
- Nine road bridges in the Valley suffered damage and will need repairs. 33 trail bridges throughout the park have been destroyed and much of the park's 800 miles of trails suffered erosion.
- Over 350 motel and cabin units at Yosemite Lodge were flooded with several feet of river water, and over 200 concession employee quarters were flooded, displacing 439 employees.
- At least ten archeological sites sustained heavy damage, resulting in total removal of some cultural features and artifacts, erosion of surface deposits and displacement of artifacts.

# SEASON'S PREVIEW

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT THIS SEASON?

### CAMPGROUNDS

This summer, approximately 1,400 campsites will be available throughout the park. Camping in Yosemite Valley will be available at Upper Pines, North Pines and Sunnyside Walk-in Campgrounds. Approximately half of the campsites in Yosemite Valley were damaged by the flood and will not be available for use this summer. Campsites lost in Lower River, Upper River, and Lower Pines campgrounds will be replaced and relocated out of the floodplain in accordance with the General Management Plan (see *Park Planning* article, page 7). As a result, sensitive areas will be restored to natural habitat.

Camping outside of the Valley will be available in Wawona, Crane Flat, and Hodgdon Meadow. Damage assessments are incomplete at several campgrounds outside of Yosemite Valley. Check visitor centers for opening status of Bridalveil Creek, White Wolf, Yosemite Creek, Tamarack Flat, Porcupine Flat, and Tuolumne Meadows Campgrounds.

To make reservations for Wawona, Yosemite Valley, Tuolumne Meadows, Crane Flat, and Hodgdon Meadows Campgrounds, call 800/436-PARK (800/436-7275).

### TRAILS

The full extent of damage to Yosemite's 800 miles of trails has been hard to determine due to the extensive snow cover. It is known that some trails have been damaged and may be closed through the summer. Others will have difficult stream crossings due to bridge damage, particularly during the predicted heavy spring runoff. However, several trails in Yosemite and the Wawona area should be open this spring. Overnight backcountry users are encouraged to make advance wilderness permit reservations by calling 209/372-0740, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Call 209/372-0200 for updated trail and wilderness information.

### LODGING

Lodging facilities not effected by the flood will be open this season. This includes The Ahwahnee, Yosemite Lodge and Curry Village. However, 350 Yosemite Lodge units were flooded and some of the Curry Village cabins will be used to house park employees left homeless due to the flood. This reduction of available facilities makes advanced trip planning important. Call 209/252-4848 for reservations.

### ROADS

Weather and road conditions permitting, Highways 41 from Fresno and 120 from Manteca, and 140 from Merced will be open to visitor traffic. Highways 41 and 120 are open to private vehicles and buses, while Highway 140 is open to bus traffic only. It should reopen to private vehicles

by Memorial Day.

Expect traffic delays and temporary closures throughout the park as extensive road and bridge repairs continue throughout the summer. Highway 140 sustained the worst flood damage, requiring major rebuilding. It is anticipated that this work will extend through the summer months. Due to the winter snowpack, damage to the Tioga Pass road remains unknown at this time.

### OTHER SERVICES

Park facilities and services not effected by the flood will reopen this spring. Services will resume gradually and increase to meet anticipated business demands. Some visitor services may be curtailed due to damaged facilities. For further information, call 209/372-1000.

## YOUR ENTRANCE FEES HELP YOSEMITE

### ENTRANCE FEES

THE PARK IS OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY,  
YEAR-ROUND.  
(fees subject to change)

TYPE	PRICE	NOTES
Vehicle	\$20	Valid for 7 days.
Individual	\$10	In a bus, on foot, bicycle, motorcycle or horse. Valid for 7 days.
Yosemite Pass	\$40	Valid for 1 year in Yosemite.
Golden Eagle Pass	\$50	Valid for 1 year in all national parks.
Golden Age Pass (Lifetime)	\$10	For U.S. citizens or permanent residents 62 and over.
Golden Access Pass (Lifetime)	Free	For blind or permanently disabled U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

Yosemite National Park has been selected as one of 300 public land sites to benefit from a three year test fee demonstration program authorized by Congress in 1996. Through increased user/entrance fees, the Department of the Interior hopes to raise additional funds needed to improve the visitor experience directly at the sites where they are collected. 80% of the increased fees collected in Yosemite will remain on site. Formerly, the majority of the entrance fees were sent to the Treasury to be distributed by Congress.

Yosemite's increased fee money will be used to improve public transportation systems within the park and to replace aging shuttle buses with alternative fuel vehicles as intended in the park's General Management Plan.

The last time park entrance fees were increased was in 1987, when they were raised from \$3.00 per vehicle per week to \$5.00 per vehicle per week.

Other parks taking part in this demonstration program include Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Mesa Verde, and Rocky Mountain National Parks.

## COMING SOON: TEMPORARY DAY USE RESERVATIONS

Yosemite's compromised infrastructure will be unable to handle the numbers of vehicles that visitors typically bring into the park during the busy season. With many of the visitor parking lots used as staging areas and temporary housing for the recovery effort, crowding in the park is expected to be worse than ever this summer. Consequently, a temporary Emergency Vehicle Day Use Reservation System is being designed. The details of this emergency plan, which is likely to be in effect from summer and into the fall, are forthcoming.

## Did You Know...

### PARK RULES

*There are several federal laws and regulations specific to national parks that protect the park area, its wildlife, historic and prehistoric sites and structures, and natural beauty. Protect your park by following these rules:*

Park animals are wild! Do not feed or approach Yosemite's wildlife. Enjoy animals from a safe distance and allow them to find their own natural sources of food.

Store your food properly, keeping it away from bears and other Yosemite animals. Use food storage lockers when available.

Pets frighten wildlife and disturb hikers. They must be leashed at all times and are not permitted on any park trails with the exception of paved trails on the floor of Yosemite Valley.

Do not remove any natural objects from the park, including pine cones, rocks, leaves, obsidian, historic items, etc. If you find an object that may be prehistoric or historic, do not remove it. Note its location and inform a ranger. Collecting materials of any kind or defacing park features deprives other visitors. Leave everything as you found it for others to enjoy. If you must collect something, pick up litter!

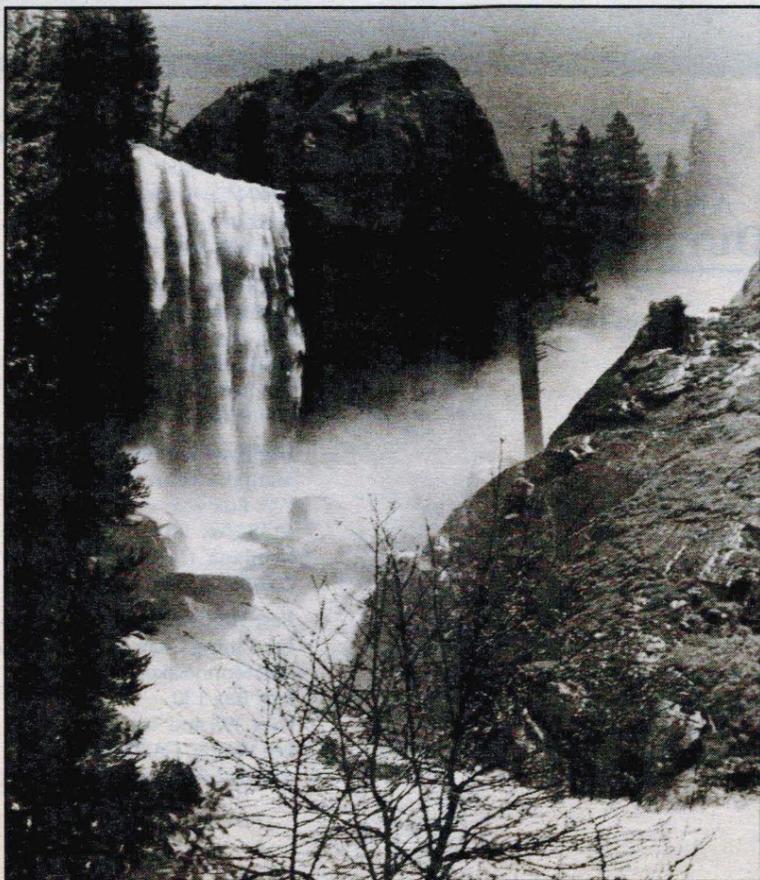
All bicycles, including mountain bikes, must remain on paved roads and designated paved bike paths. They are not allowed on hiking trails or in meadows.

Motor vehicles must stay on established roads open to public travel. Vehicles are not permitted off-road.

Firearms and hunting are prohibited in Yosemite National Park. Please report possible hunting violations by calling this anonymous toll-free hotline, 800/800-WARDEN, 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Pacific time.

Using metal detectors in the park is illegal. Please report possible violations to a park ranger.

All public buildings are designated as non-smoking.



With the Sierra snowpack at 200% above average water content, expect Yosemite's waterfalls to be spectacular all summer long. NPS Photo

# PLANNING YOUR VISIT

How will the flood effect your visit?

The information on these pages is based on preliminary damage assessments and initial recovery priorities, and may change throughout the coming months. Check park visitor centers and bulletin boards, or call 209/372-0200, 209/372-1000, or 900/454-YOSE, for updated information on park accessibility, road conditions, and availability of visitor services.

## TRANSPORTATION

### TO AND FROM YOSEMITE

**FRESNO** - VIA The Yosemite Connection / Gray Line 209/384-1315 or in CA 800/369-PARK Service between Fresno Air Terminal and Yosemite Valley begin April 1, with stops in Coarsegold, Oakhurst, Fish Camp, and Wawona. Wheelchair-lift equipped with advance notice. Schedules available at Yosemite Lodge Tour Desk, Yosemite Valley Visitor Center, or by calling VIA. Other bus trips are available from Fresno to Yosemite by advance reservations year-round.

**MERCED** - VIA The Yosemite Connection / Gray Line 209/384-1315 or in CA 800/369-PARK Service from Merced Amtrak station and Transpo Center to Yosemite Valley Visitor Center and Yosemite Lodge. Deluxe coaches provide several round trips daily between Merced and Yosemite. Wheelchair-lift equipped with advance notice. Schedules available at Yosemite Lodge Tour Desk, Yosemite Valley Visitor Center, or by calling VIA. Tickets may be purchased from drivers. Departures are from Yosemite Lodge.

**WITHIN YOSEMITE** Free shuttle bus service is provided throughout the eastern portion of Yosemite Valley year-round. In summer, free shuttle buses run from Wawona to the Mariposa Grove and from Tioga Pass to Tenaya Lake. Hikers' buses run daily to Glacier Point late spring through autumn and to Tuolumne Meadows late June through Labor Day. Call 209/372-1240 for hikers' bus fee, schedule, and reservations, or stop by any hotel tour desk.

## LODGING

Reservations for all overnight lodging in Yosemite may be made by calling 209/252-4848 or by writing to Central Reservations, Yosemite Concession Services, 5410 East Home, Fresno, CA 93727. Lodging in Yosemite Valley includes Curry Village, Yosemite Lodge, and The Ahwahnee. (The facilities at Housekeeping Camp are expected to open by April 18.) Lodging outside Yosemite Valley includes the Wawona Hotel and in summer the Tuolumne Meadows Lodge. Rates range from \$42.50 per night for a basic tent cabin with nearby bathroom, to \$227.00 per night for a room at The Ahwahnee (rates are subject to change). Fewer lodging units will be available in Yosemite this summer due to the flood. Initial assessments indicate damage to over 350 lodging units parkwide. Reservations are highly recommended and may be made up to one year and one day in advance.



Sarina Lambert, a park ranger in Yosemite Valley, may be available to interpret park information for deaf and hard-of-hearing visitors in the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center. Sarina can be reached by calling 209/372-4726 (TTY), 209/372-0599 (TTY), or 209/372-0467 (voice only). The TTY number for lodging reservations is 209/255-8345.

## 1 YOSEMITE VALLEY

Yosemite Valley is world famous for its impressive waterfalls, cliffs, and unusual rock formations. It is generally open year-round and may be reached via Highway 41 from Fresno, Highway 140 from Merced, Highway 120 from Manteca, and in late spring through late fall via Highway 120 from Lee Vining (the Tioga Road). Many activities and services are available in Yosemite Valley. Detailed information on Yosemite Valley is available at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center in Yosemite Village. Flood damage to Valley roads, trails, and facilities may effect your visit.

## 2 MARIPOSA GROVE AND WAWONA

The Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias is located 36 miles (1-1/4 hours) south of Yosemite Valley via Highway 41, two miles from the park's South Entrance Station. The road to the Mariposa Grove is not plowed in winter and is subject to closures for extended periods. Activities include hiking, ranger-led walks, and for a fee, tram tours of the Grove (weather permitting) late spring through fall. Trail brochures, printed in English, French, Japanese, and Spanish are available at the Grove trailhead. To reduce traffic congestion and avoid parking delays, visit the Grove before 10:00 a.m. or after 3:00 p.m. and ride the free shuttle bus (spring through fall) from Wawona to the Grove.

The Pioneer Yosemite History Center in Wawona is a collection of historic buildings associated with people and events that shaped the national park idea in Yosemite. Interpretive signs and a brochure provide a self-guiding tour of the Center year-round.

## 3 GLACIER POINT

Glacier Point, an overlook with a commanding view of Yosemite Valley, Half Dome, and the High Sierra, is located 30 miles (1 hour) from Yosemite Valley. The view from Glacier Point provides an opportunity to see Yosemite Valley from its rim. From Yosemite Valley, take Highway 41 for fourteen miles to the Chinquapin junction, then turn left onto the Glacier Point Road. The road ends at Glacier Point. However, in winter, the road is plowed as far as the Badger Pass Ski area; Glacier Point can be reached via skis or snowshoes only. The Glacier Point Road is generally open from late spring through late fall.

## INFORMATION FOR LODGING AND ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PARK

**YATI (Yosemite Area Traveller Information)**  
1770 M Street  
Merced, CA 95340  
209/723-3153  
<http://www.yosemite.com>

**West Highway 120**  
Tuolumne County Visitor Center  
P.O. Box 4020  
55 West Stockton Street  
Sonora, CA 95370  
800/446-1333

**Chinese Camp Visitor Center**  
Hwy 120 and Main Street  
Chinese Camp, CA 95309  
800/446-1333

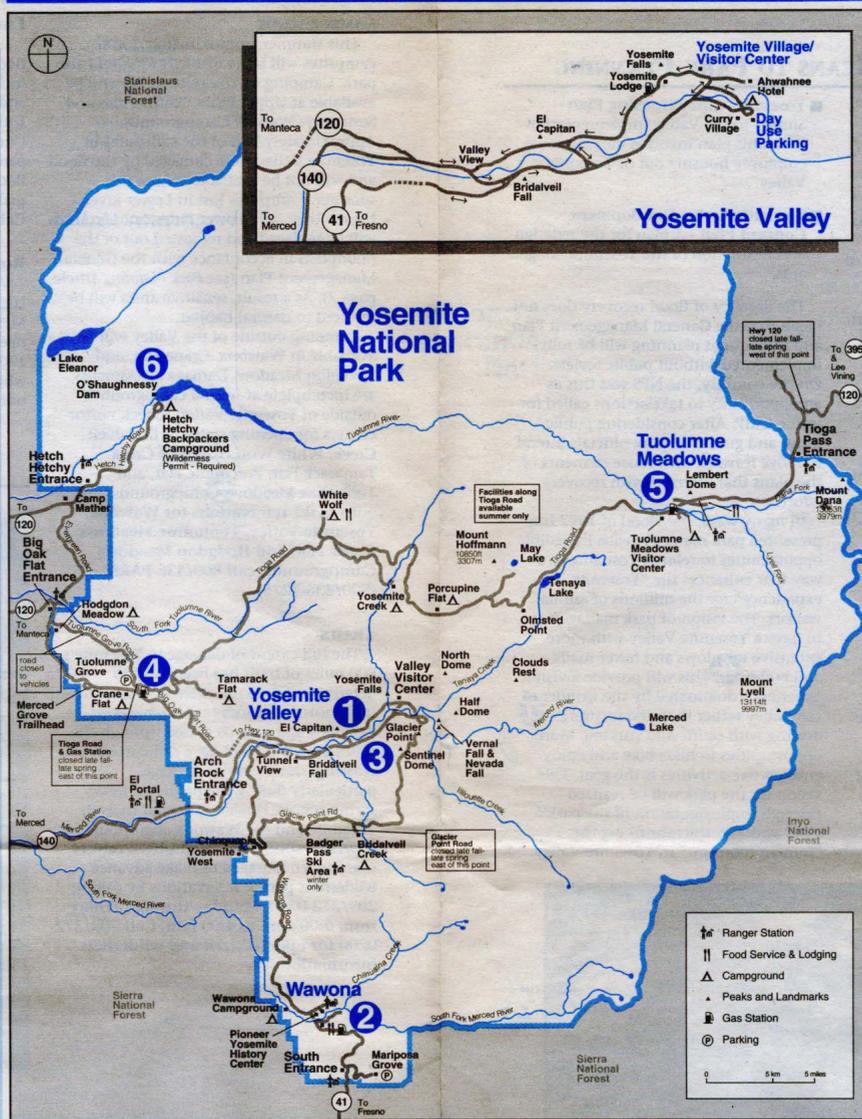
**Highway 41**  
Southern Yosemite Visitor Center  
P.O. Box 1404  
49074 Civic Circle  
Oakhurst, CA 93644  
209/683-4636

**Highway 132/49**  
Coulterville Visitor Center  
P.O. Box 333  
5007 Main Street  
Coulterville, CA 95311  
209/878-3074

**Highway 140/49; Fish Camp/Wawona**  
Mariposa Town Center  
P.O. Box 425  
5158 Hwy 140  
Mariposa, CA 95338  
209/966-2456 or 800/208-2434

**East Highway 120**  
Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce and Mono Lake Visitor Center  
P.O. Box 130  
Hwy 395 and 3rd Street  
Lee Vining, CA 93541  
619/647-6629 or 619/647-6595

## AREAS TO VISIT IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK



## VISITOR CENTERS

The four visitor centers in Yosemite National Park are excellent resources for park information, wilderness permits, and park-related publications and handouts. Hours of operation vary and are listed on park bulletin boards.

### VISITOR CENTER LOCATIONS

**Yosemite Valley Visitor Center**  
(Shuttle bus stops #6 & 9)

**Big Oak Flat Information Station**  
(Highway 120)

**Wawona Information Station**  
(Highway 41)

**Tuolumne Meadows Visitor Center**  
(Highway 120 East - open summers only)

## VISITOR ACTIVITIES

### PROGRAMS AND EXHIBITS

Some visitor services may be curtailed due to damaged buildings, facilities, roads, and trails. However, naturalist-guided walks and programs as well as self-guided walks are available. Live cultural history demonstrations of basket-weaving, beadwork, or traditional games are offered at the Indian Cultural Exhibit in Yosemite Valley. A variety of other exhibits are on display in the Valley Visitor Center, Yosemite Museum Gallery, and The Ansel Adams Gallery. Check park visitor centers and bulletin boards for additional information.



**RANGER PROGRAMS**  
Yosemite National Park

Look for this logo on flyers in visitor centers, lodgings, and campgrounds for additional program information.

## 4 CRANE FLAT

Crane Flat is a pleasant forest and meadow area located 16 miles from Yosemite Valley on Highway 120. To see giant sequoias, park at the Tuolumne Grove parking area located on Highway 120 (Tioga Road), and walk one mile down to the Tuolumne Grove of Giant Sequoias. In winter, snowshoes or cross-country skis may be needed. Be aware that there may be flood damage on the Tuolumne Grove Road.

## 5 TIOGA ROAD AND TUOLUMNE MEADOWS

The Tioga Road, generally open from late spring through late fall, offers a 39-mile scenic drive through forests and past meadows, lakes, and granite domes between Crane Flat (6,200 ft. elevation) and Tuolumne Meadows and Tioga Pass (9,900 ft. elevation). Many scenic and recreational opportunities are offered in these areas. Due to winter snow cover, damage assessment along this road is difficult. Check visitor centers and park bulletin boards for updated information on available services and activities. From late fall through late spring, this area is only accessible by cross-country skis or snowshoes.

## 6 HETCH HETCHY

Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, a source of drinking water for the city of San Francisco, is also home to spectacular scenery and the starting point for many less-used back-country trails. Towering cliffs and high waterfalls are easily seen from the walkway on top of O'Shaughnessy Dam. Hetch Hetchy Reservoir is located 40 miles from Yosemite Valley via Highway 120 and Evergreen and Hetch Hetchy Roads. This area sustained damage from the Ackerson fire (summer 1996) as well as the spring 1996 and winter 1997 floods, and is currently closed.

## TOURS

For a relaxing and informative alternative, Yosemite Valley and park-wide sightseeing tours are available. Check park visitor centers or call 209/372-1000 for further information.

## RECREATION

**BICYCLING** Several miles of paved bikeways wind through the eastern end of Yosemite Valley. California Law mandates bicyclists under 18 years of age wear a helmet. For your safety and to protect Yosemite National Park, please follow these rules: Bikes are allowed only on paved bikeways and park roads (unless the road is closed to bicycle use). All bikes are prohibited from pedestrian and hiking trails. Bicyclists must obey all posted traffic signs and travel with the flow of traffic when on roadways used by automobiles. Rental bikes are available at Yosemite lodge and Curry Village beginning April 1; check with rental agent for restrictions on rental bike use.

**HORSEBACK RIDING** Weather and trail conditions permitting, two-hour and half-day rides will depart from Tuolumne Meadows. Trail damage and a shortage of employee housing will prevent commercial horseback rides from being offered in Yosemite Valley and Wawona this summer. Call 209/372-8348 for information.

**HIKING & BACKPACKING** Yosemite offers over 800 miles of hiking trails park-wide. While some trails have suffered extensive flood damage, others will be open this summer. For updated trail information, visit the Wilderness Center in Yosemite Valley or call 209/372-0200 (press 5, then 4). Wilderness permits are required for overnight backcountry users. For wilderness permit information and reservations, call 209/372-0740. Remember to know your limits, be prepared for changing weather conditions, and carry plenty of drinking water and a flashlight. Trails are not regularly maintained or patrolled.

**ROCK CLIMBING CLASSES** The Yosemite Mountaineering School and Guide Service offers beginner through advanced classes in Yosemite Valley spring and fall, and in Tuolumne Meadows each summer. Call 209/372-8435 for information.



## SPRING ROAD CONDITIONS

When planning a trip to Yosemite, it is wise to keep in mind the changing seasons, for the timing of your visit will determine the amount of clothing you bring, the availability of different campsites, the need for tire chains for your vehicle, and the availability of high country scenery. It is a good idea to call Road and Weather Information (209/372-0200) before you leave home, but the following are some general guidelines:

**ROADS** The Tioga Road (Highway 120) and the Glacier Point Road beyond Badger Pass Ski Area are closed each year due to snow from late fall through spring. The Tioga Road generally closes for the season with the first major snowstorm after November 1 and re-opens by Memorial

Day weekend, conditions permitting. The road to the Mariposa Grove is open year-round but is subject to closures of extended periods during and after snowstorms.

**DO I NEED TIRE CHAINS?** It is recommended that you carry tire chains in your vehicle between November and April, as a sudden storm could make them mandatory at any time. For visitors driving rented cars, chains should be rented in advance; several of the towns on the highways leading to Yosemite rent chains. Vehicles over 6,000 lbs. are required to use link-type chains only, and on sets of dual tires, one tire only needs chains. Once in the park, tire chains are available for purchase at retail outlets, but not for rental.

## Who To Call... INFORMATION

Recorded General Park Information including: Road & Weather Conditions Ranger-led Activities Trip Planning Information Park Permits, etc. 209/372-0200

900/454-YOSE (live operator, daily 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

TTY 209/372-4726

TTY 209/372-0467 (voice only)

California National Parks 415/556-6030

On the Internet NPS Home Page <http://www.nps.gov/yose/>

Yosemite Association <http://yosemite.org>

Yosemite Fund <http://www.connect.net/yosemite/>

## RESERVATIONS

Lodging Reservations 209/252-4848 TTY 209/255-8345

Campground Reservations (U.S. and Canada) 800/436-7275

Campground Reservations (International callers only) 619/452-8787

## AVERAGE PRECIPITATION AND TEMPERATURES IN YOSEMITE VALLEY (4,000 FT.)\*

MONTH	PRECIPITATION (inches)	MAXIMUM (°F)	MINIMUM (°F)
January	6.2	49	26
February	6.1	55	28
March	5.2	59	31
April	3.0	65	35
May	1.3	73	42
June	0.7	82	48
July	0.4	90	54
August	0.3	90	53
September	0.9	87	47
October	2.1	74	39
November	5.45	58	31
December	5.6	48	26
Annual	37.2		

\*For temperatures in the high country subtract 10-20 degrees.

# YOSEMITE'S FUTURE

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Friends of Yosemite,  
By now you know that Yosemite has experienced significant damage from flooding. In the days following the storm, it became evident that Yosemite's "natural" environment remained little changed. However, the "human" environment—buildings, roads, campgrounds, power, and sewer systems—sustained major damage. The challenges that lie ahead of us in the recovery and reopening phases are extensive and far-reaching.

In the months to come, we will be producing newsletters, holding public briefings, and releasing documents for public review which will be used to refine alternatives and select a final

course of action. We will need the assistance and participation of many before the process is complete. In turn, I encourage you to share your hopes, ideas, and comments with us by writing to me, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389 ATTN: Yosemite Recovery Process. Documents will also be available on the Internet via the NPS Planning Home Page (<http://www.nps.gov.planning/>).

B. J. Griffin,  
Park Superintendent



B. J. Griffin  
Superintendent

## WHAT THE FLOOD MEANS TO PARK PLANNING

"The key to rebuilding intelligently is learning from the mistakes of the past," states Yosemite Superintendent, B.J. Griffin. The Flood of 1997 provided validation for the extensive planning efforts that have been ongoing since 1980. Park officials knew where problems existed, and the flood underscored the fact that facilities need to be moved out of the floodplain.

In 1980, the National Park Service (NPS), with extensive public involvement, produced a long-range plan to guide the future of the park—Yosemite's General Management Plan (GMP). The primary goals of the GMP are: to reclaim priceless beauty, reduce cars and congestion, and allow natural processes to prevail. These goals remain valid today. The National Park Service has no intention of deviating from existing plans as it deals with recovery efforts. Instead, NPS recognizes it has an important opportunity to act on and follow through with the GMP.

Fortunately, a great deal of time has already been spent over the last three years working through alternative solutions. Park officials are now hard at work incorporating new information from the flood into the planning process.

■ **Valley Implementation Plan** - A plan designed to implement portions of the General Management Plan that effect Yosemite Valley. The plan presents alternatives for moving facilities out of the floodplains, river corridors, and meadows in Yosemite Valley. In many cases, facilities may be relocated out of the Valley completely.

■ **Yosemite Valley Housing Plan** - Similar to the Valley Implementation Plan, this plan involves moving some employee housing out of Yosemite Valley.

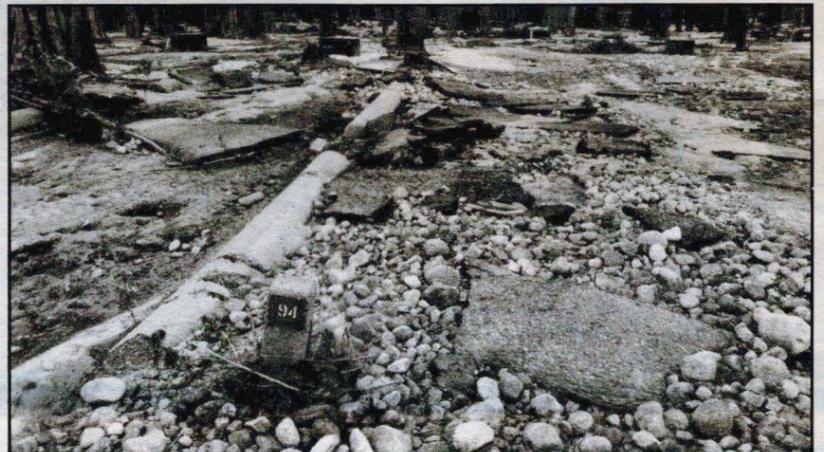
■ **Yosemite Lodge Development Concept Plan** - A plan for the redesign and restoration of the Yosemite Lodge area.

The urgency of flood recovery does not mean that the General Management Plan and subsequent planning will be fully implemented without public review. On the contrary, the NPS sees this as an opportunity to take actions called for in the GMP. After considering public input and guidance, park officials intend to move forward with those elements of the plans that intersect with recovery efforts.

In many ways, the Flood of 1997 has presented park managers with incredible opportunities to rebuild Yosemite in a way that enhances the "Yosemite experience" for the millions of annual visitors. The vision of park managers is to have a Yosemite Valley with more extensive meadows and fewer roads and buildings. This will provide a visitor experience dominated by the wonder of the Valley rather than the frustration of dealing with traffic and parking. More opportunities to hike, bike and enjoy interpretive activities is the goal. This vision for the park will be realized through implementation of the park's GMP and VIP, thus shrinking the "human footprint" in Yosemite Valley.



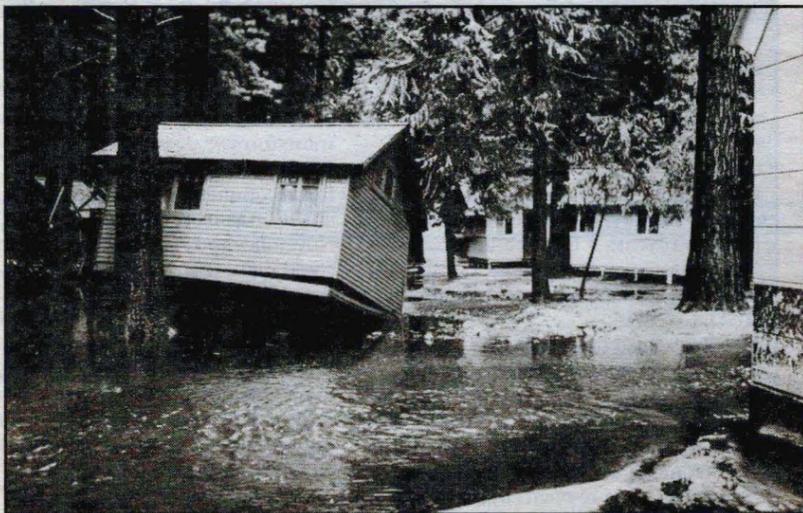
The vision of park managers is to have a Yosemite Valley with more extensive meadows and fewer roads and buildings. NPS Photo



Campgrounds will be reconstructed out of the floodplain according to GMP recommendations. Where campsites are removed, the area will be restored to natural conditions. Where campgrounds remain, missing trash cans, tables, grates, and bear-proof storage lockers will be replaced. NPS photo

## HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

Flooding in Yosemite Valley is a common occurrence. Some of the most severe flooding of this century occurred in 1937, 1950, and 1955. As the Merced River seasonally overflows its banks, roads, campgrounds, and other visitor facilities located next to the river are effected. Damage photographs from previous floods document similar flood zones and closely resemble photos taken this past January. By moving facilities and structures out of the Merced River's floodplain, park managers will reduce the likelihood of comparable damage in the future.



In 1950, flood waters along Yosemite Creek left cabins of Yosemite Lodge askew. NPS Photo



The scene is repeated in 1997 as facilities at Housekeeping Camp are destroyed. NPS Photo





# YOSEMITE ASSOCIATION

## JOIN THE YOSEMITE ASSOCIATION

The Yosemite Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to the support of Yosemite National Park through a program of visitor services, publications, and membership activities. For nearly 70 years, the Association has provided important financial support to the National Park Service and has made possible the funding of many projects and purchases otherwise not affordable through normal government appropriations.

### PLEASE JOIN US!

Sign up for a membership today and receive the dramatic *Flood of 1997* video described on page 2 as an additional free gift.

As a member of the Yosemite Association, you will:

- enjoy a 15% discount on all books, maps, and publications
- qualify for a 10% discount on most field seminars
- receive the quarterly journal, *Yosemite*
- have a chance to attend special members' events and volunteer programs in the park
- have access to a members only information line
- know that your membership supports significant educational, research, and environmental projects in Yosemite National Park

Membership is a critical element in the success of the Association. Individuals and families throughout the country have long supported the Yosemite Association through both their membership dues and personal commitment.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Charge to my Visa/Mastercard \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_



P.O. Box 230  
El Portal, CA 95318  
209/379-2646  
<http://yosemite.org>



# THE YOSEMITE FUND

## MAKING TRAILS FOR FLOOD RELIEF

Yosemite boasts 800 miles of trails, but the disastrous January floods took out over 20 footbridges, leaving this network in a sadly fragmented state. The flooding also caused numerous trail washouts and greatly increased erosion problems throughout the park. Since 1985, The Yosemite Fund has been providing funds for trail repair and other special projects in Yosemite. In the aftermath of the worst flood damage on record, the Fund has set up a special appeal to help the park recover, with trail repair being just one part of this emergency flood relief effort.

Using donations from individuals, corporations and foundations, the Fund has enabled many trail repair projects that would not otherwise have been possible due



to lack of federal funds. The Fund has also stretched donor dollars by co-sponsoring trail repair crews from the California Conservation Corps (CCC), a state-run program to give young Californians the opportunity to gain job skills and an outdoor education. Revenue from the Yosemite license plate program, as well as gifts from people who love

Yosemite, are helping to keep park trails in good repair—and ultimately to safeguard all the park's natural treasures, now and for generations to enjoy.

This year, Fund-sponsored trail repair projects will go forward on the Mist Trail and trails through Red Peak Pass, Isberg Pass and Kerrick Canyon. Many flood-damage projects will soon be added to the list.

You, too, can become a Friend of Yosemite and help the Fund's Emergency Flood Relief Effort. Please send your donation today. Donors of \$25 or more are listed at the Honor Wall in Yosemite valley and receive the Fund's publication *Approach*, showing exactly how gifts are used to provide for Yosemite's future.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Charge to my Visa/Mastercard \_\_\_\_\_

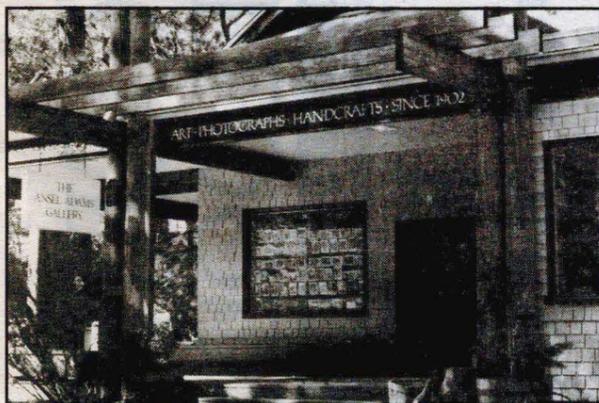
Expiration date \_\_\_\_\_



THE YOSEMITE FUND  
Providing for Yosemite's Future

P.O. Box 637  
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK,  
CA 95389  
415/434-1782  
<http://www.connect.net/yosemite/>

## FACILITIES & SERVICES



Visit the Ansel Adams Gallery located in Yosemite Village.

Park facilities and services not effected by the flood will reopen this spring. Services will resume gradually and increase to meet anticipated business demands. Check visitor centers and bulletin boards for specific information or call 209/372-1000.



Bus tours and sight-seeing trams depart daily, conditions permitting.

### EMERGENCY 911

**FIRE – POLICE – MEDICAL EMERGENCY:  
DIAL 911, 24 HOURS A DAY  
(FROM HOTEL ROOM 9-911)**

### MEDICAL

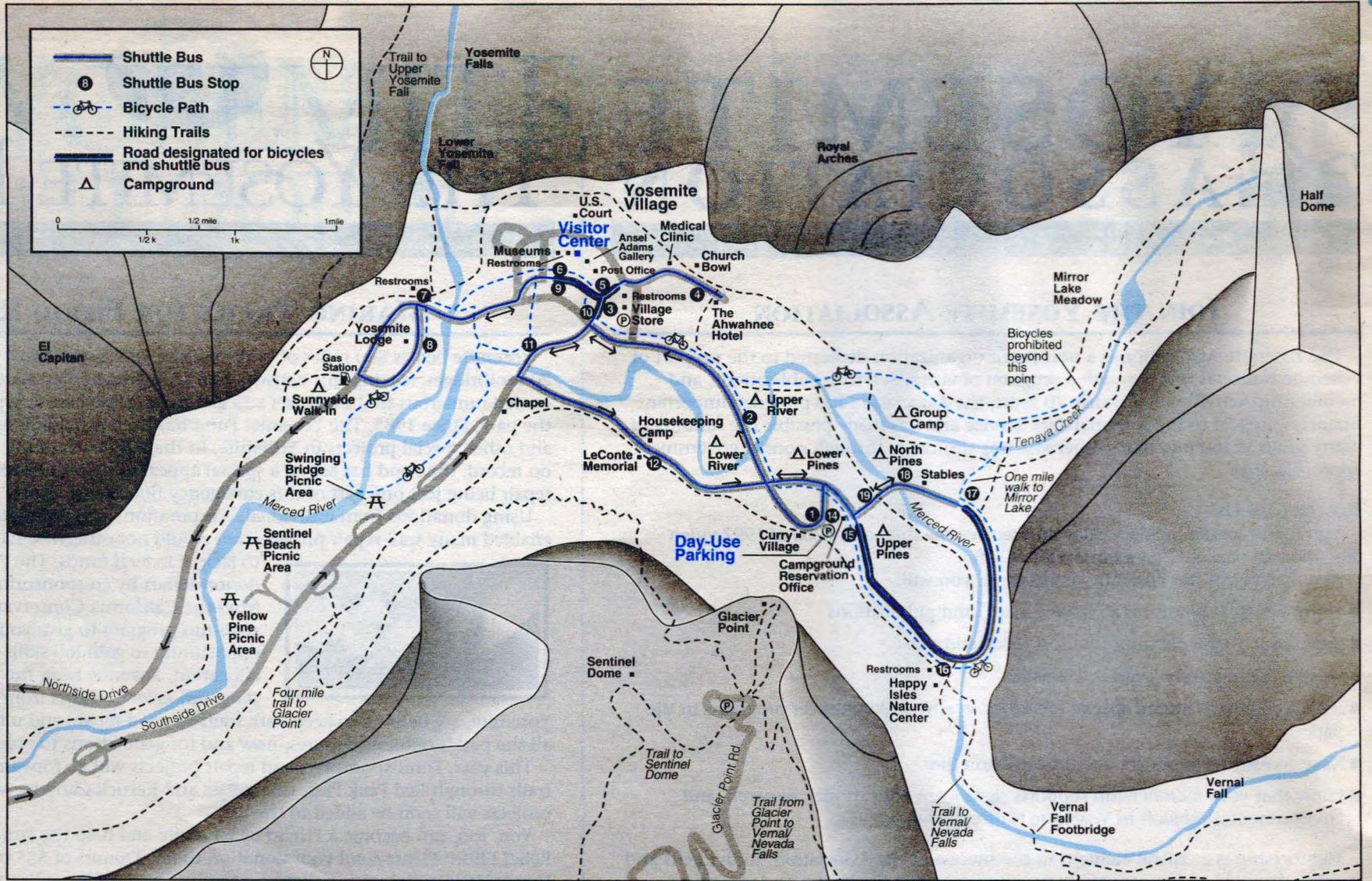
**YOSEMITE MEDICAL CLINIC**  
Emergency care 24 hours daily  
Drop-in and Urgent Care: Daily 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
Scheduled appointments: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday 9:00 a.m. to Noon. 209/372-4637

**DENTAL SERVICES**  
Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Adjacent to Medical Clinic. 209/372-4200

### LOST AND FOUND

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
LOST AND FOUND OFFICE**  
Call 209/379-1001 Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. to Noon, 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. or write  
NPS Warehouse, 5083 Foresta Rd., B-759, El Portal, CA 95318

U.S. Department  
of the Interior  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 577  
Yosemite, CA 95389



## YOSEMITE VALLEY SHUTTLE BUS INFORMATION



Shuttle buses are free and operate daily.

Bus times and stops may vary in the coming months.

### TENTATIVE STOPS

- |  |  |                                       |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Day Use Parking/Curry Village                          | 6 Visitor Center                               | 12 Housekeeping Camp/LeConte Memorial |
| 2 Upper and Lower River Campgrounds (destroyed by flood) | 7 Yosemite Falls                               | 14 Day Use Parking/Curry Village      |
| 3 Yosemite Village/Visitor Center                        | 8 Yosemite Lodge/Sunnyside Walk-in Campground  | 15 Upper Pines Campground             |
| 4 The Ahwahnee   | 9 Visitor Center                               | 16 Happy Isles                        |
| 5 Yosemite Village                                       | 10 Yosemite Village                            | 17 Mirror Lake/Meadow                 |
|  | 11 Sentinel Bridge/Parking for Yosemite Chapel | 18 Stables (closed)                   |
|  |  | 19 Lower Pines Campground             |

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