To: GregAdair@aol.com

From: George Whitmore <geowhit@qnis.net>

Subject: Need to talk.

Cc: yojo@batnet.com, syl@qnis.net

Bcc:

Hi. First, a few housekeeping items:
My e-mail address was wrong on your "Press meeting report."
It should be

geowhit@qnis.net

Mike Paparian's e-mail address was the one which is not working. What works better is

michael.paparian@mcswebl.com

(The character just before ".com" is an Arabic numeral "1", not the letter "1"; I don't know whether it makes a difference.)

Mike McCloskey is going to need to see a lot of our stuff. (I redirected your "Press meeting report" to him, also to Paparian.)

jmmccloskey@aol.com

I cannot get through to your phone (which makes me wonder whether e-mail gets through to you; maybe Sylvia and Joyce will be the only ones to see this.)

We are running into problems with the meeting date of 29 January.

I cannot recall whether there was some reason why we did not pick 22 January. Unless there was, I am thinking we should move the meeting up a week. Can you check your notes from the last meeting? Maybe they would show why the 22nd was not good.

Thank you for helping on the press conference to which we were not invited, and for the report on it. Can you fax me a copy of the handout which Joyce prepared for the conference? And can you let me know if you receive this? (I am discovering a fairly high incidence of people not receiving e-mail, and the sender is not aware it was never received.) Thanks again.

To: Carl Pope

From: George Whitmore <geowhit@qnis.net>

Subject: Yosemite/Babbit

Cc: Mike McCloskey, Mike Paparian

Bcc:

Carl--

Glad to hear we got invited to Babbit's Monday event, especially since he has sometimes made a point of acting as though we don't exist.

My main concern is that our presence at the event may be construed (by Babbit, the media, or others) as implying support of policies or processes that we either oppose or don't have a position on. But I guess you have had lots of experience in handling that type of situation.

If you get a chance to talk to him (or you could bring it up in media interviews), I would like to question his often-stated refusal to address the role of ever-increasing demands on Yosemite as it relates to degradation of both the natural resources and the visitor experience. On both those counts he is placing the Park Service in the untenable position of violating their own Organic Act.

A perfect illustration of the problem lies in the cars vs. busses argument. Yes, sometimes there are too many cars. So he wants to limit cars, which can be ok if done in a reasonable manner. But his answer is to replace them with unlimited numbers of big, smelly, noisy, visually intrusive diesel busses. I don't see how anyone can say that is ok. If we are going to have too much of something, I would much rather it be cars than busses.

Last October in Yosemite Valley when Babbit was introducing the new Superintendent, I heard him say (twice in the course of an hour), "There is room for everyone in this Park, they just can't bring their cars." I couldn't believe the overly simplistic view. When I expressed concern to Babbit's aide that we could end up with an even worse problem with too many busses, I got a distinct brush-off.

(We run into the same problem within the Sierra Club. So many of us seem to think the solution to Yosemite's problems is to get rid of cars. Come on, folks, the threats to Yosemite are IMMENSELY greater than that. We are running the risk of not seeing the forest for the trees.)

A potential trap to watch for has to do with the NPS's contention that they are reducing overnight accomodations with the Valley Plan. I'm sure that's true, because they have said there will be significant reductions in camping and housekeeping camp. But I suspect that close inquiry will reveal that they want to build more higher cost motel units to replace the lower cost motel units taken out by the flood. In other words, in the course of reducing the total overnight use, they are using the opportunity to shift toward more high-end (i.e. more profitable) accomodations. Of course this would change visitor demographics even further in ways that cannot be good for the Park.

Hope this gives you a couple ideas for how you might use the opportunity on Monday.

George Whitmore

(P.S. As to the Lodge units taken out by the flood, our position is that the flood was simply implementing the intent of the 1980 General Management Plan, and it was a heaven-sent opportunity. FOLLOW THE GMP. DO NOT REBUILD THAT WHICH NATURE HAS TAKEN OUT.)

To: Dick Kunstman

From: George Whitmore <geowhit@qnis.net>

Subject: L.A. Times 26 March

Cc: joyce eden

Bcc:

Dick--

I have just forwarded to you the above article, plus today's article from the San Jose Mercury News. Because I have received some negative feedback about the "quote" from me in the L.A.Times, I have re-read it several times, and each time I have noticed something I hadn't noticed before.

First I noticed that it was taken out of context. I had tried to get the reporter to understand the concept of "limits" by pointing out that Babbitt's refusal to address it will result in a far worse problem with busses than we have now with cars.

Then I noticed that part of the "quote" was in brackets; in other words, they weren't

really my words, even though they were within my quote.

Then I realized that if the words in brackets are simply dropped from the quote, you get to what I actually said. I remember speaking of limits generically, trying to avoid exactly what the reporter decided to insert within the brackets.

So much for trying to get reporters to hear what we are saying.

But what's done is done. The L.A. Times has reported that we supposedly said that Yosemite, and the visitor experience, will be harmed unless Babbitt deals with the issue of ever-increasing numbers of people.

Maybe it's just as well it appeared in print that way. If we get no negative response from the public perhaps we (and Babbitt?) will find it easier to speak the unspeakable. If

there IS a backlash, we can learn from it.

One of the ironies of this concern over speaking out is that Mihalic is quoted in today's Mercury News article as saying that, "Right now, there are so many people in the valley....we can't accomodate these numbers and still preserve it..." Maybe Babbitt is looking for Mihalic's replacement already.

George.

Joyce: Is this what Carl and you were concerned about, or am I missing the point?