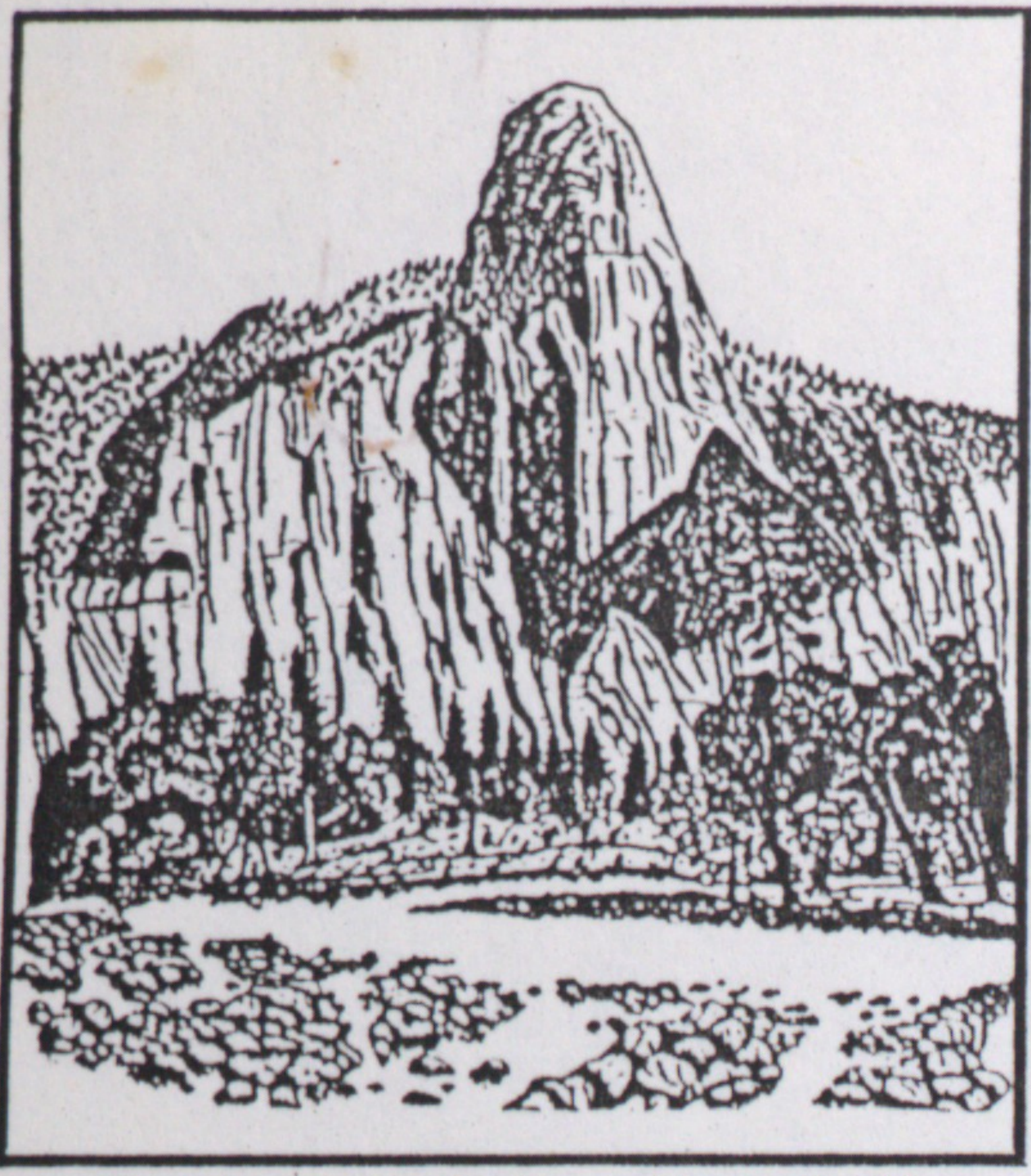


# Tehipite Chapter • Sierra Club



Tehipite Dome by Doug Harwell, '81

*To explore, enjoy and preserve the nation's  
forests, waters, wildlife and wilderness.*

17 January 1990

Ann Dellavalle  
Kings River Ranger District  
Sierra National Forest  
34849 Maxon Road  
Sanger, CA 93657

Your file# 2370

Dear Ann:

Perhaps protocol would call for this letter to be addressed to Paul Pratt or Jim Boynton, or Wally, but since you were the one who contacted us, I decided to address this letter to you. I hope I am not stepping on any toes.

This is in response to the meeting we had just before Christmas regarding possible adjustments to the boundary of the Kings River Special Management Area. I described the issues to our executive committee at their regular meeting on December 20, and they passed the following resolution:

"The Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club believes that adjustments to the boundary of the Kings River Special Management Area should not be made except for the purpose of enhancing resource protection.

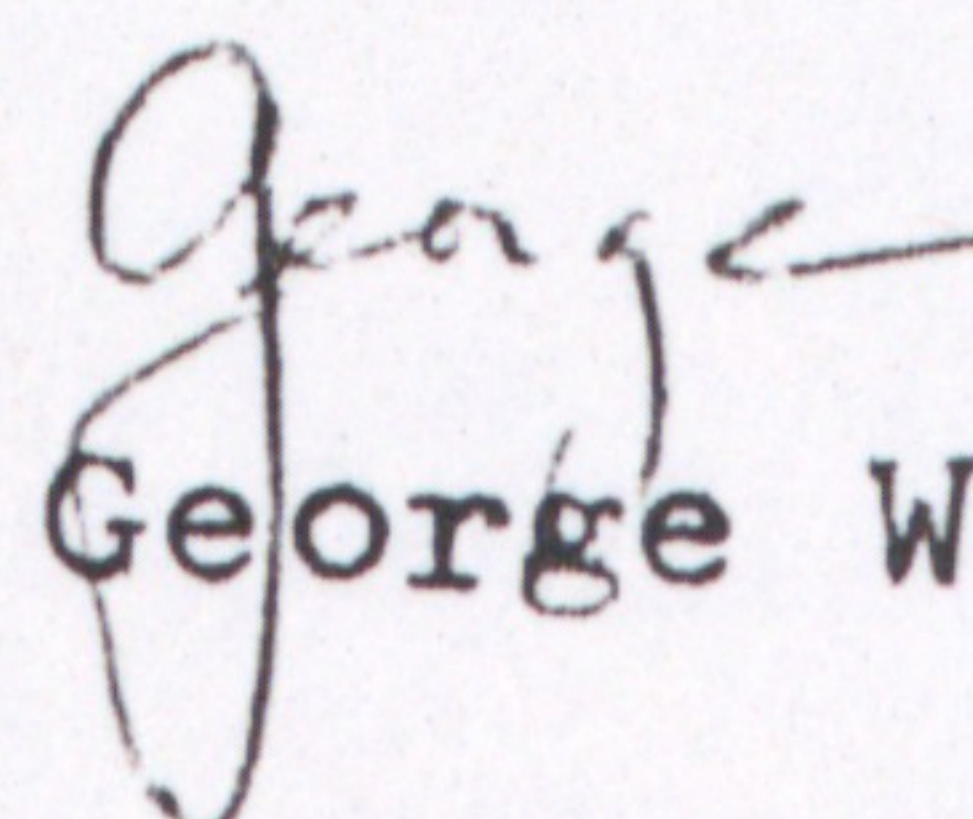
"For example from Garlic Spur to Garlic Meadow the boundary could be placed directly on the hydrographic divide, resulting in a more logical, identifiable, and defensible boundary.

"We do not believe it is appropriate to delete areas from the SMA simply because they may have an economic value if used in some other way."

Our executive committee is the only entity which has the authority to establish Sierra Club policy on an issue such as this. I took it to them because, upon reflection, I decided the issue was significant enough to warrant formal action.

Thank you for having invited us to the meeting. I look forward to further participation as the process moves forward.

Sincerely,

  
George W. Whitmore



To: Brenda, Ananda, Heather, Joe Ruff, kathleen, Marsh Pitman, Ron Mackie, sylvia, iones@thegrid.net  
From: George Whitmore <geowhit@qnis.net>  
Subject: U.C.Merced  
Cc:  
Bcc:

Hello all--

I have tried to include on the recipient list our Ex Comm, RCC delegates and alternates, and Merced Group contacts. I do not have e-mail addresses for Gerald Vinnard or Doug Broten. (I tried to include Bill Fjellbo in this, but the e-mail would not go to anyone until I deleted his address.) Could someone please forward this to them?

As you know, the Chapter and its Merced Group have an extensive history on this issue, going back as much as ten years. We opposed U.C.'s selection of the Smith Trust lands near Merced, and the matter rested there until quite recently. When funding (and planning) for the project got into high gear that put us in the position of trying to ensure that due process was followed in order to minimize environmental harm. The result was a Dan Walters column statement that the local Sierra Club supports the U.C. project.

This in turn resulted in extensive and intensive criticism of the Chapter from throughout the Sierra Club (and elsewhere, for that matter) for supporting the paving over of wetlands (vernal pools). Never mind the fact that we had never supported U.C. going to that site; we were now accused of doing so. In an attempt to clarify matters, the Ex Comm has passed several resolutions in the past few months. Strangely, this appears to have created more confusion, rather than less.

The statewide Sierra Club created a Task Force to come up with a recommendation for statewide action. There was very heavy discussion of the subject ten days ago at the statewide meeting at San Luis Obispo. The upshot is that there will probably be a vote of the statewide body on July 8 (north) and July 9 (south). Unless the Chapter comes up with a position that is acceptable to the statewide Sierra Club, there is a strong likelihood that they will enact a policy that we won't like.

The Ex Comm meeting tomorrow night (June 21) will be our last chance to vote on a policy that might resolve the problems. I therefore urge that a significant block of time be allotted on the agenda to discussing this matter and voting on it.

There are several suggestions for possible wording, with more coming in every day. I will send some of them. I think it might simplify things if I sent each one separately. So far I have:

1. Chapter policy (17 May revision).
2. Chapter Conservation Committee recommendation (7 June), as amended by Merced Group.
3. RCC Task Force recommendation (19 June), as amended by Fraser Shilling.

I will now send this message, followed by each of the above in turn, separately.  
George.

P. O. Box 5572  
Fresno, CA 93755

18 March 2004

Superintendent  
Yosemite National Park  
P. O. Box 577  
Yosemite, CA 95389

Attn: Yosemite Village Parking and Transit Improvements

FAX: (209) 379-1294  
Email: Yose\_Planning@nps.gov

Sir:

The following comments are submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club. We appreciate the opportunity to provide ideas for this scoping process.

The fact that the project is identified in at least three different ways on your website makes it difficult to know just what you have in mind. On the grid which shows the status of each different project, this is identified as "Yosemite Village Interim Parking Improvement". But on the two-page fact sheet provided at the same time, it is referred to as "Yosemite Village Parking and Transit Improvements". On the fact sheet it is also referred to as the "Consolidated Yosemite Village Parking and Transit Area".

Is this project to address "interim" needs, or permanent ones? Review of your documents and discussions at the Open House suggest ambivalence. But that is a pretty fundamental question, and it needs to be settled before any meaningful discussion can take place.

And what is the significance of referring to the project as "Consolidated" at one point, but not others?

Again, some of your statements suggest that you see this as a step toward implementation of the Yosemite Valley Plan. But if that is what you see it as, then it seems impractical to consider it at this time, totally separated from the rest of the Yosemite Village planning.

For example, if this is to implement the Valley Plan, then you should be looking at placing parking/transit facilities in the areas presently occupied by the concessionaire headquarters and the garage, since those facilities are slated for removal. If your response to this will be to say that those areas are outside the project boundaries, then the project boundaries need to be changed to incorporate those areas.

But if this project is just to deal with the temporary problems created by removal of parking at Lower Yosemite Fall, the Lodge, Curry, and other areas, then consideration of creating parking lots in the oak woodland south of the present Visitor Center and west of the present Village Store would be totally unthinkable. To phrase this as a scoping comment, how can you justify paving over a previously undeveloped area just for a temporary use? As to a permanent use, see the following paragraph.

On the other hand, if you are implementing the Valley Plan, then you need to be looking at putting the parking on previously developed land presently occupied by the corporate headquarters and the garage. And there would be even less reason to go into the oak woodland.

Again, you are constrained by unrealistic project boundaries which need to be changed. On an interim basis, parking should be restored and retained in the apple orchard at Curry Village. Closing this down at this time serves no useful purpose, and simply compounds a parking problem which continues to get worse.

We have said it before: Stop removing parking before you have put measures in place to deal with the consequences. You have been removing parking for years without having any alternatives to deal with the resulting congestion. Your present development activities are continuing that long-term trend.

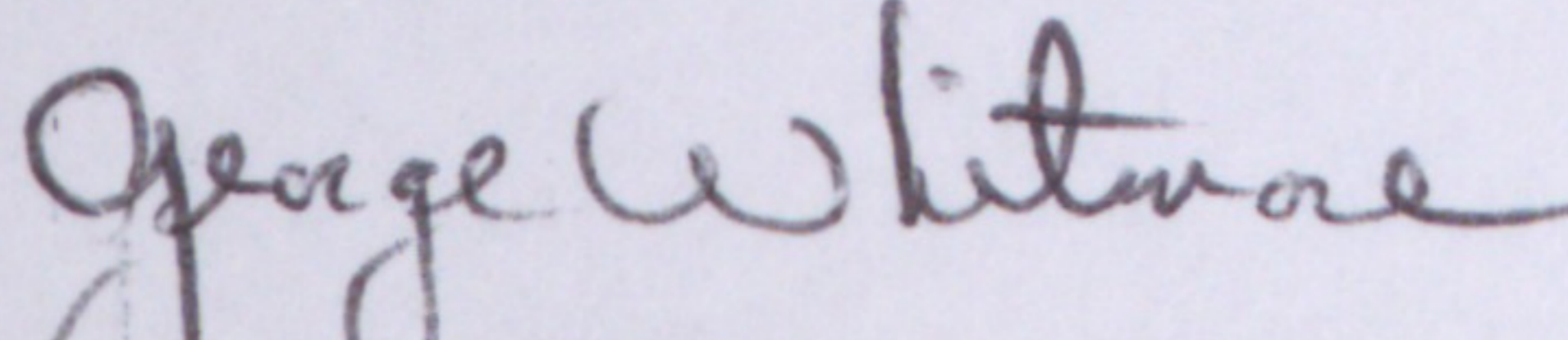
Even if your development plans were desirable, which we do not agree with, they are seriously out of sequence. You need to slow down enough to get the horse in front of the cart.

In other words, if this project is to implement the Valley Plan, then it is premature and should be deferred so it could be incorporated into planning for the greater Yosemite Village area.

But, especially if the project is only to deal with problems on an interim basis, then there should be no intrusion into previously undisturbed areas. And some of the other projects should be slowed down to avoid exacerbating an already serious shortage of parking.

These comments are overly brief because of technical problems. We consider this project to be of special significance, and you will be hearing more from us. In the meantime, we thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

  
George Whitmore, Chair

Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee