

Sierra Club  
1050 Mills Tower  
San Francisco  
California

(1)

Statement of George W. Whitmore  
Sierra Club

before the National Parks and Recreation Subcommittee  
of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs  
Regarding the Wilderness ~~pp~~ proposal for  
Pinnacles National Monument

March 25, 1974

Mr. Chairman, I am George W. Whitmore  
from Kingsburg, California. I am representing  
the Sierra Club. As you know, we are a  
national organization with approximately  
150,000 members throughout the entire United States.

I am very pleased to have the  
opportunity to testify on the proposal for a  
Pinnacles National Monument Wilderness.

I lived in the nearby Salinas Valley for  
several years, and have visited the Monument  
on numerous occasions over a period of  
more than twenty years. During those visits

(2) PIN

I have camped, climbed, and hiked throughout the Monument.

As a result of those visits I have acquired a fairly extensive knowledge of Pinnacles, and have developed an intense ~~interest~~ personal interest in helping to ensure the preservation of its natural and scenic

values. It is my hope that future generations might have the same opportunity to experience the rewards and pleasures that have been mine in the course of my visits.

I might note that many others also share a great love for this land. Pinnacles may be small, but it is unique and offers a type of experience not to be found elsewhere on public land in California.

These factors, plus its proximity to major population centers, have resulted in very heavy public use at certain times of the year.

③ PIN

As a consequence of these and other factors, the management of Pinnacles National Monument is a very critical matter which merits your exceptionally close attention.

In this testimony, we are responding to what we believe to be the current proposal of the National Park Service as reflected in their map number 114-20,000 dated June 1973, showing a proposed Wilderness of 10,980 acres.

We wish to commend the Park Service for what is basically a very fine Wilderness proposal. In particular, it reflects very substantial and meaningful improvements over some of the earlier proposals.

There are, however, several ways in which their proposal could be improved even further.

Because of the small size of Pinnacles National Monument, we feel that it is especially important that most of the administrative, service, and visitor facilities be located outside those portions of the Monument which are of greater value for their scenic and other natural values.

(4) PIN

This principle holds true especially for roads — both those which already exist and any which might be proposed. Pinnacles is so small that any further fragmentation by additional roads would <sup>severely</sup> impair the Monument's natural and scenic values.

I have walked the valleys and ridges of the northern portion of the Monument, and was impressed by a sense of remoteness and isolation far in excess of my actual distance from civilization. This portion of the Monument seems ideally suited for low-density visitor use; with perhaps its highest value being to serve as a refuge for wildlife — particularly those species which are subject to intense pressure and harassment outside the Monument.

These values would be utterly destroyed if a road were ever to be constructed through the northern portion of the Monument, and for this reason we strongly urge that the present Park Service proposal for Wilderness in this area be adopted.

(5) PIN

There is an additional reason why no road should ever be ~~built~~ constructed through the northern portion of the Monument. This is that such a road would attract casual motorists who would have little, if any, interest in Pinnacles National Monument itself, but who would simply be using the road as a convenient means of traveling between the Salinas and San Benito Valleys.

It should be noted that Pinnacles already is under very intense pressure from visitors who go there to enjoy its natural and scenic values. A road across the Monument would attract large numbers of people whose primary interest is in recreational motoring. Pinnacles is simply too small to absorb that additional burden without severe destruction of its natural values.

There has been some local interest expressed in having such a road. We would like to point out that if such a need truly exists it could easily be satisfied by improving the existing La Gloria road in Bickmore Canyon. This existing road

⑥ PIN

lies outside the Monument and is only three miles north of the route which has sometimes been suggested for a new road within the Monument. The Park Service itself ~~is~~ routinely uses the La Gloria road, and there is no reason why the local citizenry could not do the same—particularly if the road were surfaced for all-weather use.

We are not aware of any Park Service plans for expansion of facilities in the Chaparral campground and ranger station area. For this reason, we take exception to the Park Service's failure to include more of the nearby lands within their Wilderness proposal. In particular, the area between the Chaparral campground and the Chalone Cave appears to be ~~not~~ eminently suitable for Wilderness classification, and it is of exceptionally high scenic value. We especially urge its inclusion within the Wilderness.

We are also unaware of any Park Service plans which would justify their failure to include sizeable acreages in

⑦ PIN

the Bear Gulch area. We urge that the Wilderness boundaries be brought closer to the existing Bear Gulch roads, cave, and reservoir.

We feel that the administrative service road which extends beyond the Chalone camp grounds should be permanently closed to all motorized vehicles. This road originally led to a public campsite near the Chalone Cave. The Park Service wisely realized that this was not an appropriate place for camping or other roadhead facilities, and so closed the road at a point near the present Chalone camp grounds.

Although the road is not <sup>hard-</sup> surfaced, it could easily be traveled with a bicycle. We suggest that the Park Service use this mode of transportation, that the road be closed to all motorized traffic, and that the roadbed be considered to be a high-standard trail and that it be included within the Wilderness boundaries.

To summarize, we commend the Park Service for their fine proposal. We heartily endorse it in principle,

PIN

(8)

but feel that it could be improved by:

1. Bringing the Wilderness boundaries closer to the Chaparral campground and ranger station.
2. Bringing the Wilderness boundaries closer to the Bear Gulch facilities, to the Bear Gulch cave, and to the reservoir.
3. Including within the Wilderness the administrative road which presently extends beyond the Chalone campgrounds.

Most important of all, we repeat that any road across the northern portion of the Monument would be an utter abomination which would be terribly destructive of the natural and scenic values which the Monument was created to preserve. This is particularly true when you realize that a perfectly viable alternative already exists outside the Monument boundaries.

Thank you.

Sierra Club  
1050 Mills Tower  
San Francisco, California  
94104

STATEMENT OF GEORGE W. WHITMORE

SIERRA CLUB  
BEFORE THE NATIONAL PARKS AND RECREATION SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS  
REGARDING THE WILDERNESS PROPOSAL FOR

PINNACLES NATIONAL MONUMENT

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Thank you.

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Please return to:

**Committee on Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Room H2-550 Ford House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515**

Referred to: George Whitmore

Hearing date: March 27, 2001

Subject: Oversight Hearing on: Final Yosemite Valley Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Serial No.: 107-8

Jacket No.: 71-353

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2830 DBO

2831 STATEMENT OF GEORGE W. WHITMORE

2832 Mr. WHITMORE. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and staff.

2833 Thank you for this opportunity. I am George Whitmore, Chair  
2834 of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee.

2835 I was born in central California and have been fortunate  
2836 enough to have lived there, near Yosemite, most of my life.

2837 I have experienced Yosemite intensively and extensively over  
2838 many years, starting as a child in the 1930s, and including  
2839 many memorable years in the 1950s as a rock climber.

2840 We agree with the stated intent of the Yosemite Valley  
2841 Plan and are pleased that the Park Service did respond to  
2842 public comments on the draft plan, to some extent, by cutting  
2843 back on planned expansion at Yosemite Lodge and softening the  
2844 draconian cuts in lower-cost accommodations.

2845 However, we still have some very large concerns. Those  
2846 concerns focus largely on transportation issues and on the  
2847 impact which unceasing, infinite growth in day visitor usage  
2848 has on a very finite Yosemite Valley. These two concerns are  
2849 obviously closely interrelated. Former Interior Secretary  
2850 Bruce Babbitt's often stated view that, "there is room for  
2851 everyone in Yosemite, they just can't bring their cars" was  
2852 overly simplistic. Unfortunately, it was the mandate the  
2853 Park Service was given and it resulted in a flawed plan.

2854        The new Valley Plan has abandoned the concept of limits  
2855        which was in the 1980 general management plan. At the same  
2856        time, no program has been put in place to address the  
2857        consequent problem of ever-increasing stress on the visitor  
2858        experience and on the natural resources. The only response  
2859        to more and more day visitors seems to be planning for more  
2860        and more buses, without acknowledging that buses can become  
2861        the problem instead of cars.

2862        Buses obviously could be part of the solution. Our  
2863        concern is with the excessive focus on them which fails to  
2864        recognize that they are already well on the way to becoming a  
2865        worse problem than the cars.

2866        There are several different bus systems serving Yosemite  
2867        now--the long distant excursion or tour buses, the regional  
2868        buses, including YARTS, which operate from the gateway  
2869        communities, the in-Valley shuttle buses, and those which  
2870        transport people to other points within the Park. In  
2871        general, our comments apply to all types of buses.

2872        These existing buses are already having an impact which  
2873        needs to be reduced. They need to be cleaner, meaning fewer  
2874        air-polluting emissions. Quieter, smaller, to reduce the  
2875        demand for wider and straighter roads. And generally, less  
2876        intrusive. There is a serious need to convert from diesel to  
2877        a less harmful technology, and that is one area which  
2878        probably would benefit from increased funding. But

2879 especially in the absence of cleaner, quieter, smaller and  
2880 less intrusive, we object to the seeming acceptance of buses  
2881 as being a cure-all.

2882 Of course, what is driving the demand for more and more  
2883 buses is the given parameter that "there is room for  
2884 everyone in Yosemite". The concept of limits is certainly  
2885 not foreign to the public. We encounter it routinely in so  
2886 many aspects of everyday life and we adjust accordingly. To  
2887 take an extreme example, even with an operation such as  
2888 Disneyland, in which large crowds and crowding are accepted,  
2889 sometimes the demand threatens the quality of the visitor  
2890 experience, so the company takes steps to manage the demand.  
2891 It totally escapes us why this is considered not acceptable  
2892 for Yosemite Valley.

2893 We believe that if the Park Service would try a  
2894 reservation system for day use, they would find it accepted  
2895 by most people, especially if some of the available space  
2896 were set aside for those who plan to visit at off-peak times  
2897 or simply choose to take their chances. Such a system would  
2898 eliminate the need for degradation of both the visitor  
2899 experience and the natural resources which this Plan would  
2900 allow--a degradation, incidentally, which would be in  
2901 violation of the Park Service's own Organic Act.

2902 We feel that the concepts employed in this Plan, while  
2903 undoubtedly well-intentioned, have generally been taken too

2904 far. The zeal to improve the Yosemite Valley has resulted in  
2905 a massive urban redevelopment plan. But this is not a city.  
2906 It is the crown jewel of our National Park System, the  
2907 incomparable valley, a world heritage site, the holy of holy.  
2908 It deserves much better of us.

2909 I would be happy to take any questions you might have.

2910 [The statement of Mr. Whitmore follows:]

2911 \*\*\*\*\* INSERT \*\*\*\*\*

3062     automobiles to their overnight units, to a day use parking  
3063     lot, or to a satellite lot, and then on a clean fuel shuttle  
3064     into the Valley.

3065     But I think 550, you know, is somewhat of a magic number,  
3066     because it's large enough to accommodate off-season  
3067     visitation levels without any reductions in those. So that's  
3068     sort of the magic number.

3069     Mr. RADANOVICH. I see.

3070     Mr. Whitmore, the Sierra Club has been, I guess, a pretty  
3071     outspoken opponent of the Plan, particularly in the area of  
3072     YARTS. I know Mr. Brower, who is now deceased, prior to that  
3073     had mentioned a real objection to relying on diesel buses or  
3074     relying on a Park plan that requires more people to go on  
3075     diesel buses in order to enjoy Yosemite.

3076     If I'm accurate in that description, and I think I am,  
3077     what would be your plan, knowing that if you don't rely on a  
3078     busing system, instead looking at 550 spaces, if you're less  
3079     reliant on one, you're looking at more parking spaces in the  
3080     Valley.

3081     Mr. WHITMORE. Thank you for the question, Mr. Chair.

3082     I would like to clarify one point. The Sierra Club has  
3083     actually never taken a position on YARTS, as such. We like a  
3084     regional approach to things, and to the extent that YARTS is  
3085     a regional program, we think that it's a good idea to  
3086     approach it that way. So we never--

3087       Mr. RADANOVICH. I stand corrected, then.

3088       Mr. WHITMORE. We never endorsed YARTS, as such, even  
3089       though we were asked to, because we didn't know what they  
3090       would come up with. They then came up with a fleet of diesel  
3091       buses.

3092       Mr. RADANOVICH. Were Mr. Brower's comments basically his  
3093       comments?

3094       Mr. WHITMORE. Those were his personal comments, yes.  
3095       And then when they came out with a fleet of diesel buses,  
3096       this was one of the things we had feared. That can be  
3097       changed, I presume.

3098       As far as what we would like to see to deal with the  
3099       problem, we have limitations on practically everything I can  
3100       think of in Yosemite, except for day use. My impression is  
3101       that this was Mr. Babbitt's fixation, that we are not going  
3102       to limit day use. Well, if you don't limit day use, you're  
3103       going to end up with more people than you can handle at  
3104       certain times. Eventually, maybe that would be a very large  
3105       amount of days out of the year. Currently, it's a rather  
3106       small number of days out of the year.

3107       So we feel that most of the year you don't have a  
3108       problem.

3109       Mr. RADANOVICH. Right.

3110       Mr. WHITMORE. And during those times that you do have a  
3111       problem, I think you have to accept the idea that Yosemite

3112 Valley is finite and you are probably going to have to  
3113 implement a partial reservation system. I don't think it  
3114 should be totally reservation, because this is a little too  
3115 restrictive. I don't think people are ready for that. But  
3116 just as with the wilderness permits, there are advance  
3117 reservations for some of it and then some of it is on a  
3118 walk-up basis. I don't know why that couldn't be done with  
3119 people who drive up to the gate.

3120 Mr. RADANOVICH. Did the Sierra Club support the concept  
3121 of gate closures, that when there was a certain amount of  
3122 people in the Park, they would shut the gates?

3123 Mr. WHITMORE. I wasn't on the scene at the time, but I  
3124 have seen enough congestion in the Valley at peak times  
3125 during the summer that I can well imagine the problem got out  
3126 of hand. There were too many cars in the Valley at one time,  
3127 so the Park Service had to do something.

3128 I think their way of handling it left something to be  
3129 desired. They should not have done it so abruptly. I think  
3130 there needed to be more public education, more advance  
3131 notice. It doesn't make sense that you have large lines of  
3132 cars waiting at the gate because it has been closed  
3133 unexpectedly. That leads to the matter of congestion in the  
3134 Valley itself, not just at the gate. But there are a lot of  
3135 things the Park Service could do to relieve congestion in the  
3136 Valley, simple things that would not take a lot of money.

3137        We find it inexplicable that the Park Service has not  
3138        done a lot of planning for traffic management in the Valley.  
3139        There are some problem intersections that could be  
3140        redesigned. There is too much confusion over this business  
3141        of, well, is it a one-way loop, or are we putting the  
3142        northside traffic back on southside temporarily, and if so,  
3143        at least cover up the signs that say get in the left lane if  
3144        you're going to cross over Stoneman Bridge. If you do get in  
3145        the left lane, you'll have a head-on collision. I have run  
3146        into that personally twice. Just the most elementary things  
3147        that display a certain level of adequate management.

3148        Mr. RADANOVICH. To me, the obvious example is rerouting  
3149        the road around Yosemite Lodge and getting it on the same  
3150        side as Yosemite Falls, lower Yosemite Falls, where your  
3151        parking is there. You could relieve easily one bad  
3152        bottleneck in the Park.

3153        Mr. WHITMORE. Yes. I'm not sure that the Plan the Park  
3154        Service is talking about now, for running the road around the  
3155        south side of the lodges, is the best way to go. But  
3156        certainly that intersection is one of the major problems and  
3157        it needs some thought about how to redesign it to deal with  
3158        that situation.

3159        Mr. RADANOVICH. Thank you very much.

3160        Mr. Hardy, would you comment on one thing for me. You  
3161        know that there is already money that is appropriated for the

Testimony of

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Chairman of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee  
before the  
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Committee on Resources  
U. S. House of Representatives

Oversight hearing on implementation of the Yosemite Valley Plan

April 22, 2003

I. INTRODUCTION.

We appreciate having been invited to testify before the Subcommittee.

II. OVERVIEW of the Valley Plan and associated problems.

A. Too much is being done too quickly.

A chaotic situation has been created wherein so much is being attempted so quickly that it seems inevitable that one project will end up conflicting with another, or simply create more problems because other things should have been done first.

As an example, we cite the Lower Yosemite Fall project. Replacement parking for the tour busses ultimately is supposed to be created behind the Village area, but that project is not even being mentioned. In the meantime the tour busses will be shunted from one temporary site to another in the Lower Fall area because their previous parking is being removed. And, continuing a long tradition, more automobile parking is being removed without any improvement in the Valley shuttle bus service to facilitate a transition to less reliance on private autos.

B. Problems with public notification and input.

Adding to the chaos, the Park Service keeps asking for public input, but it is difficult for the public to be aware of what is happening. So it's hardly surprising that they don't have enough information to comment in a rational manner.

The Park Service has been conducting a series of Open Houses on their planning and projects. These offer an immense amount of information and are very useful. But they have almost all been during the week and during the day, so very few people would be able to attend them even if they were aware that the event was occurring. (There will be another one on Wednesday, the day after this hearing, from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

The Park Service relies excessively on their web site. Many people simply are not in the habit of getting their information this way. There needs to be more use of mailings to update the public on projects, planning, and comment deadlines.

C. Potential problems because of litigation.

Another reason for slowing the pace of development in the Valley is because litigation over the Merced River Plan still has not been resolved. It is currently before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the likely outcome is not at all clear. The River Plan is supposed to provide a foundation for the Valley Plan (as directed by a District Court judge), and projects now underway might have to be placed on hold if the Circuit Court should find even one problem with the River Plan. Particularly if that one problem happens to be the failure to "address user capacity" as called for by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. That issue alone could pull the underpinnings out from much of what is in the Valley Plan.

D. Simple measures would yield large results.

Much of the development called for by the Valley Plan would not be necessary if simple steps were taken to deal with congestion. There are a few problem road intersections which have been allowed to fester for decades. Why not redesign those intersections instead of turning the whole Valley upside down? Again, inadequate or confusing directional signs has been a problem for decades. Instead of providing better signs, the Park Service points to the confused drivers going around and around and says the solution is to get rid of the drivers and their cars.

E. Day-use reservation system: simple and effective.

And the most obvious solution of all to deal with the congestion which occurs a relatively small portion of the year would be to implement a day-use reservation system with a portion of the slots being available on a first-come-first-served basis. That way those who need to be assured of getting in on a specific date would have that assurance, while those who prefer a more spontaneous approach would probably still get in. Most of the time there is simply not a problem of too many people or too many cars.

There is much anecdotal evidence that many people don't come because they think it is crowded, or they won't be able to get in, or they won't be able to drive their car in. A reservation would ensure their getting in, and would steer them away from the times that do tend to be crowded. We suspect that a reasonably implemented day-use reservation system would actually reverse the continuing decline in annual visitation, as well as improve the quality of the visitor's experience.

We hasten to point out that the Valley Plan actually moved AWAY from the concept of a day-use reservation system. The idea was implied in the 1980 General Management

Plan, but that seminal beginning was deleted by amendment through the Valley Plan process. It is one of the reasons that we are less than enthusiastic about the Valley Plan.

This action of the Valley Plan was actually in contravention of the Park Service's own regulations, which direct that every unit of the National Park System address the carrying capacity issue. This requirement was brought out in the General Accounting Office's November 15, 2002 report on transportation projects in the National Park System ("National Park Service: Opportunities to Improve the Administration of the Alternative Transportation Program").

### III. OTHER TRANSPORTATION ISSUES in addition to those mentioned above.

#### A. South Side Drive widening and North Side Drive closure.

While it is not on the table yet, we dread the day that the Park Service starts widening South Side Drive in anticipation of closing North Side Drive. At present, South Side Drive (as well as North Side Drive) provides two lanes of one-way traffic, making for the safe and pleasant movement of movement of different types of vehicles in one direction. Faster and slower...autos, busses and bicycles...all are accommodated smoothly.

In order to move traffic as well if it were two-way, as called for in the Valley Plan, four lanes would be required. Huge numbers of trees would have to be removed, and an ugly swath of asphalt inviting high speeds would take their place. The very idea is an abomination which never should have found its way onto paper. To keep it at two lanes (one in each direction) would result in gross traffic congestion, a high accident rate, and an unpleasant visitor experience.

And all this because someone thought it would be a good idea to close North Side Drive to traffic. JUST LEAVE THINGS ALONE! This is a prime example of failure to anticipate that "restoration" of North Side Drive would inevitably result in gross destruction of natural values and quality of the visitor experience on South Side Drive.

#### B. Realignment of North Side Drive in vicinity of Yosemite Lodge.

Again, why can't it just be left alone? Because the Lower Fall project has already committed the Park Service to another project which doesn't make sense. The four-way problem intersection could easily have been fixed without a massive realignment of North Side Drive, or moving overnight lodging closer to the rockfall zone. The entire Lower Fall, Lodge redevelopment, and North Side Drive realignment complex of projects is an example of planning run amuck. A massive urban redevelopment project, without regard for the fact that this is a national park.

#### C. Segment "D" of the El Portal road (Highway 120/140 junction to Pohono Bridge).

While it is not on the table yet, and the environmental reviews have not been started, it is quite clear that the Park Service has every intention of raising this segment of road to the same standard as the newly completed section. And this is in spite of the fact that the gradients and curves that provided the rationale for the other construction do not exist on Segment "D". Although portions of the road require stabilization because of flood damage, this could be accomplished without the massive impacts to the landscape that would be required if the road were reconstructed to the same standard as that already done. Rather than a blind insistence on uniform widths just for the sake of uniformity, we ask that the road not be rebuilt except as necessary for safety.

#### D. YARTS.

Because there continues to be misunderstanding as to the Sierra Club's attitude toward YARTS, we wish to make it clear that we support efforts, including those by organizations such as YARTS, to address regional transportation issues which affect Yosemite provided those efforts advance the goals of the 1980 General Management Plan. Those goals include reduction of traffic congestion, reduction of overcrowding, and promotion of visitor enjoyment.

We should also add that we strongly urge that transportation systems be implemented in such a way as to make progress toward cleaner air.

#### E. Tour (excursion) busses.

One of the biggest deficiencies in the Valley Plan is its failure to address the ever-increasing demand for access to the Valley by tour busses. The Plan makes much of the problems which are perceived to be caused by autos, with Draconian restrictions on their use. Yet it simply ignores the potentially far worse problem which will be caused by unlimited numbers of highly polluting and noisy tour busses.

It is our understanding that the Park Service has the authority to regulate tour bus access to the Park, and could require that the busses meet specific emission standards as a condition of entry. If the Park Service does not have that authority, it seems that enabling legislation would be appropriate. If they already have the authority, it seems that they need to be encouraged to move in that direction.

And, to the extent that tour busses are carrying day-use visitors, our comments above regarding the wisdom of a day-use reservation system would apply to tour busses also.

#### F. Fuel cells.

We appreciate Mr. Radanovich's interest in seeking cleaner air for Yosemite, and we support a fuel cell project provided the goal is to make progress toward

cleaner air in Yosemite. Apparently the project would not necessarily be for a bus; if it is for a stationary facility, we suggest Crane Flat because the electricity supplied there now is from a diesel generator.

G. Valley shuttle busses.

We would like to see the present fleet of old and polluting diesel busses replaced with vehicles which would match former Western Regional Director John Reynolds' vision of "the cleanest busses in the world", as articulated by him before this Subcommittee on March 27, 2001.

We are not convinced that a diesel powered electric hybrid bus would meet that vision. We would like to see a comparison of the alternatives, including propane powered electric hybrid, gasoline powered electric hybrid, and straight propane powered. If emissions data shows that diesel powered hybrids would be the cleanest and otherwise suitable, we could support that. But diesels have such a bad reputation that it seems hard to believe they would prove to be the cleanest just because they are put into a hybrid application. It seems as though the others would also be cleaner in the hybrid application, still leaving diesel at a relative disadvantage. Like I said, we would like an opportunity to review the comparative data, but have been having some difficulty getting the information.

H. Expansion of the Valley Shuttle Routes.

It would seem that this is one of the less controversial actions called for in the Valley Plan, and has the potential for reducing congestion and facilitating visitor access. Yet we see no indication that the Park Service has any plans for taking it up in the foreseeable future. We believe they have indicated that they would first have to build a series of stops complete with rest rooms, so they are looking upon it as a massive undertaking.

It seems self-evident that people drive all around the Valley now, stopping and getting out of their cars, at countless places where there are no rest rooms. We see no reason why public transportation could not be provided on the same basis.

I. Day-use parking.

As alluded to above, we find it highly inappropriate for the Park Service to continue to remove day-use parking without first providing suitable alternatives to the use of the private auto. Much of the congestion which actually occurs is the result of removal of parking, which has been ongoing for at least the last twenty years. We are usually in favor of removing asphalt, but not if it is simply going to get laid down somewhere else (as called for in the Valley Plan), and not if it results in degradation of the visitor experience (as called for in the Valley Plan).

IV. CAMPGROUNDS.

We support the decision in the 2000 Yosemite Valley Plan to restore the Upper and Lower River Campground sites to natural conditions. We also support the expansion of additional camping opportunities outside Yosemite Valley as suggested by recent Park studies. In particular, we support the 1980 General Management Plan provision that there be "in kind" replacement of camping opportunities to compensate for those which are removed from Yosemite Valley.

We note that there has been a continuing long-term process of reducing camping opportunities throughout the Park. It appears to be part of the pattern of phasing out lower-cost accommodations, and putting in higher cost accommodations, which has manifested itself so clearly in the Yosemite Valley Plan. Recognizing that it is difficult to find suitable locations for new camping opportunities in the Valley, we feel there is all the more reason to make every effort to find appropriate locations as near as possible outside the Valley.

Another way of compensating for the loss of campgrounds within the Valley would be to provide adequate shuttle service into the Valley from outlying campgrounds.

#### V. CONCLUSION.

We thank you for the opportunity of testifying.