24 September 1987

The Honorable Jim Costa, Chairman Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife State Capitol P.O. Box 942849 Sacramento, CA 94249-0001

> Re. Proposed San Joaquin River Parkway Project

Dear Mr. Costa:

In response to your request made to me at the public hearing in Fresno on 17 September on the above subject, here is an expanded written version of the comments I made at the hearing.

As I mentioned at the hearing, I was pinch hitting for Bob Wright, who had become ill. Although speaking off the cuff, I was confident of the appropriateness and accuracy of my remarks based on my many years of involvement with the Sierra Club at various levels and in various capacities. This includes having been Chairman of the Tehipite Chapter, and also its conservation chairman.

Since the hearing I have discussed the San Joaquin River Parkway proposal with our present chapter chairman. He agreed that the proposal would become a major priority for us, and is one for which we anticipate spending a significant portion of our resources to help bring it into being.

We realize there is no definite plan at this point, but what we support is the concept of a greenbelt parkway. Questions as to boundaries, who will administer it and how, what is or is not compatible with the greenbelt concept, and so on will presumably be worked out in due course. Uncertainties over such matters do not preclude us from enthusiastic support of the concept and a great desire to see it brought to fruition.

We believe there is an especially valuable role that many organizations, ours included, could play in establishing and maintaining a parkway. That is the provision of volunteer labor to assist in the development and maintenance of the parkway.

For many years the Sierra Club has, nationwide, conducted an extensive program of service trips which have utilized volunteer labor to accomplish tasks which, in many cases, otherwise would not have been achieved. Many of these trips have been on public lands in the Sierra Nevada.

Typically these have involved trail construction or maintenance, removal of litter or debris (including aircraft wreckage). meadow

restoration through erosion control and water impoundment, development of interpretive facilities, restoration of historic structures, etc. I mention these simply to illustrate the broad scope of the service trips. The intensity of agency supervision varies greatly, depending on the complexity of the particular project.

In recent years the Tehipite Chapter has become even more actively involved in conducting our own service trips, and involvement in the parkway would be a logical expansion of a trend already established. It is also the type of project for which it would probably be relatively easy to enlist volunteer help because of the close proximity of the parkway to the homes of most of us.

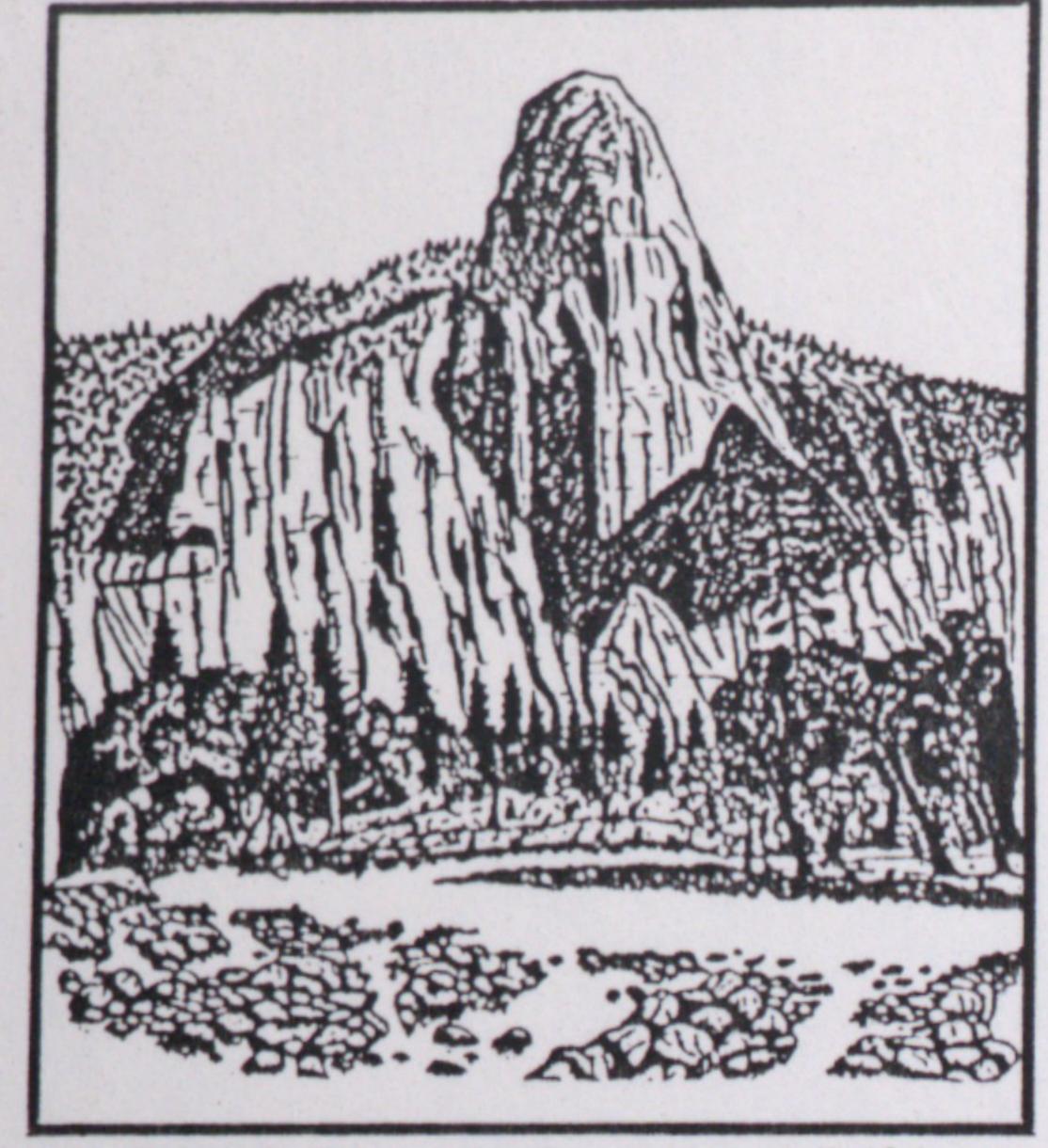
Over the years I have observed many other groups also involved with service projects. Typically these have been scout troops and church groups, both of which exist in large numbers. I am confidant that many other groups besides ours would be willing to help develop and maintain a parkway.

I believe the total impact of all these groups working together would be substantial and would greatly reduce the amount of money which would otherwise have to be spent.

As I said at the hearing, we greatly appreciate your support of the parkway concept, and we look forward to working constructively with you and others to help make this concept a reality.

Sincerely.

George W. Whitmore



Tehipite Chapter • Sierra Club

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

6 April 1989

Tehipite Dome by Doug Harwell, '81

John M. Morehead, Superintendent Yosemite National Park ATTENTION: Theresa Dunn, Environmental Specialist P.O. Box 577 Yosemite, CA 95389

Your file: L7617

Dear People:

Thank you for your letter of 24 March in which you announce your intention to prepare an EIS to assess the impacts of upgrading concessioner housing in the Yosemite Lodge area.

We are greatly disturbed by the general thrust of your approach to this proposal.

You list one alternative as being "pursuant to the General Management Plan," while the other alternative describes the action which you are considering. While you don't state it explicitly, the action under consideration would constitute a gross, major, and irrevocable breach of one of the GMP's most fundamental tenets---namely the relocation of employee housing out of the valley.

We strongly feel that all of the alternatives should be legitimate ones in the sense that they would be consistent with the GMP. There is something wrong with the process when the course of action under consideration (major, new, and permanent employee housing in the Yosemite Lodge area) would constitute a major breach of the GMP.

If abandonment, revocation, or major amendment of the GMP is really what is at stake here (and it does appear to be the case), then we believe the matter should be addressed directly. If you are going to do an EIS, then let it address the fundamental issues. Those are the status of the GMP, whether it is still a relevant management guide, and how you propose to amend it if indeed you do feel it needs amendment.

Perhaps we have mis-read your letter, and maybe the situation is not as grim as it appears. Sometimes person to person dialogue can accomplish wonders in minimizing or eliminating problems. If you would be interested in meeting with some of us, we would be happy to try to arrange that.

In the meantime, we do appreciate your continuing to keep us informed.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore (209) 229-5808

