

Mike #-

31 January 1968

I think this letter is self-explanatory. I would hope that it might help to influence the Board of Directors, although of course it is to be hoped that the Board has sense enough to come up with the correct decisions on its own.

I am sending you a copy of it largely on the chance that Ed Wayburn will not see the original prior to the Board meeting. In the event that this happens, perhaps you could see to it that this copy gets into the appropriate hands.

Tehipite Chapter is wondering where we stand on making a statement at the Master Plan hearing on the 13th. Could you let me know immediately following the Board meeting what was decided? Thank you.

P.O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

31 January 1968

Rigar Wayburn, M.D.
1050 Mills Tower
San Francisco
California 94104

Dear Dr. Wayburn,

I have just received an informal report of the deliberations of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Master Plan Committee chairmaned by Dick Pitman. I was quite astonished to learn that this committee will be recommending to the Board of Directors that the club go on record as favoring the complete elimination from Yosemite Valley of all overnight accommodations, but favoring the retention of camping.

I find such a recommendation to be quite deplorable from the point of view of national park values, and of great potential harm to the club as far as public relations are concerned. I am writing you in the belief that a more moderate viewpoint should be presented to the Board of Directors. I have not had an opportunity to clear this letter with Tehipite Chapter's Executive Committee, but would like to point out that the opinions expressed herein reflect the extensive deliberations of our chapter. Our recommendations are the result of four meetings, encompassing a month's time and many hours of thought and discussion.

During the course of our discussions some members proposed the elimination from Yosemite Valley of all overnight accommodations, including camping. This proposal was ultimately dropped because it proved to be quite divisive and never gained sufficient adherents. It should be noted that, even among the proponents of this idea, it was considered unthinkable that the club recommend exclusion of commercial accommodations without also recommending exclusion of camping. The majority opinion was that neither form of overnight accommodation should be eliminated, and we were unanimous in believing that you could not exclude one without also excluding the other. So much for the record. I would now like to present a few thoughts.

John Muir, for one, did not insist upon camping out at all times during his stays in Yosemite Valley. In fact he seems to have been quite willing to accept the need for the shelter of a cabin. It should be noted that at one point he described going out into the midst of pouring rain, apparently spending hours wading around in the flooded meadows and reveling in the grandeur of water cascading over the cliffs. It seems rather apparent that he would not have been as free to enjoy this experience if he had not had the shelter of a cabin to retreat to at the day's end. A person who is camping out simply does not have the freedom to subject himself to the rigours of foul weather. This is a luxury which can reasonably be enjoyed only if there is secure shelter to return to. Are we going to tell the public that they should be permitted to enjoy Yosemite Valley only during periods of good weather?

Fortunate is he who is able to view the splendors of Yosemite immediately following a winter snowfall. Even those who have not experienced the Valley under the conditions of clearing storm-cloud and fresh-fallen snow realize from photographs that this must be an experience to be treasured. Are we going to tell the public that only a hardy few who are willing to camp out in the midst of winter storm will be permitted to savor the Valley under these conditions of exceptional beauty?

I cringe at the thought of the headlines that such a stand by the club would produce. It would surely mark an all-time low in our public relations. May I earnestly urge that more mature and wiser opinion will prevail at the meeting of the Board of Directors?

Sincerely,

cc. Michael McCloskey
Ed Daubs

George W. Whitmore
Chairman, Conservation Committee
Tehipite Chapter

P.O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

7 Feb 68

Robert B. Moore
National Park Service Western Regional Office
Box 36063
San Francisco
California 94102

Dear Mr. Moore:

I wish to testify at the Yosemite Master Plan hearing to be held in Fresno on February 13. I expect to be speaking as an individual and not as a representative of any organization.

In the event that you have not already received a request from the Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club that they be permitted to testify, I wish to make such a request now. This is in my capacity as chairman of the chapter's Conservation Committee. (It is not clear to me at this time whether our chapter chairman has already made this request.) I wish to make it clear that, in the event that Tehipite Chapter does testify, I do not expect to be the speaker.

Thank you,

George W. Whitmore

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

7 May 68

Bob Owen
3785 N. Barton Avenue
Fresno
California 93726

Dear Bob,

Several things. First, let me ask you to give Mills Tower the above address for us next time you send a batch of changes in. Thank you.

We have learned (second-hand) that the following people have expressed interest in joining the club, but do not know how to go about it:

Loyd Breakey (there is a possibility that this name is spelled wrong)
3775 E. Richert
Fresno

(Mrs) Elsie Pretzer
4710 E. Thomas
Fresno

(Mrs) Virginia Milne
4644 E. Cornell
Fresno

(correctly pronounced with a silent "e", but frequently pronounced "mill-knee" to avoid confusing people) (Sister and aunt, respectively, of Mrs Joyce Benner and Roger Benner, who are members.)

Could you ~~xxx~~ make the appropriate contacts, provide with application blanks, etc?

Which points up a situation which needs correction. Namely, the general membership of the chapter does not know who the membership chairman is (or even that there is one, for that matter); also, the general membership of the chapter has never been provided, to my knowledge, with application blanks to carry around so they can sign people up when the opportunities present themselves. Perhaps a periodic (or even monthly) notice in the Topics is in order. It seems to me that ~~kk~~ it would help to get more members participating in the chapter's responsibilities if there were a monthly listing of chapter officers and committee chairman, together with their phone numbers and addresses. As it is, it almost appears that we are attempting to keep participation ~~xxxx~~ exclusive, particularly since this is really the way it ~~xx~~ is with some organizations.

As a start, maybe you could drop Mrs. Benner a note, along with some application blanks, and commend her for her interest in helping new people to join the club.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

3035 N. Farris Avenue
Fresno
California 93705

4 June 1968

Stewart M. Brandborg, Executive Director
The Wilderness Society
729 - 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Brandborg:

The Wilderness Society is one of perhaps a dozen conservation organizations in which I maintain membership. I support several of these with periodic supplementary contributions, normally lumping them in alternate years for tax purposes. This is one of the years in which I will be making such payments.

The last time I made these contributions The Wilderness Society distinguished itself by being the only organization which failed to acknowledge the gift. I found this somewhat disturbing, and in part because of the amount involved, which was \$200. The fact that I had singled out The Wilderness Society for my largest contribution also was conducive to my discontent.

I would like to make a contribution to The Wilderness Society again this year, but hardly feel like doing so unless I know that the gift will be acknowledged. At present, I have no reason to think that it would be. Perhaps you could clarify the situation for me.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore

(I wrote the check on 10 January 1966, it was apparently deposited on 18 January 1966, and was canceled by my bank on 20 January 1966. I trust that it was deposited to the account of The Wilderness Society, although without an adequate system of receipting there can certainly be no assurance of this. There is much to be said in favor of serially numbered receipts, which I notice a number of organizations use.)

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg, Calif 93631

3 Jun 69

Dear Tony,

Judging from comments I have heard from people such as Lobree and Board, who have done a fair amount of talking before groups such as you are being asked to do, and also judging from my own experience with this difficult but necessary type of activity, I conclude:

Don't talk. They would rather look at pictures. So, get them a movie, or a slide show. Of course you always give your pitch at the start of a movie, or narrate it if it is silent, or give a running commentary if it is a slide show. This approach seems to go over much better than a "speech".

Re. a slide program. Lobree, few years ago, gave a program on The Rape of Hetch Hetchy, or something on that order. It was a program which had been made up, using slides, by a fellow who had been a ranger in Yosemite (he has since left this area, but left a set of slides with us.) Seems to me his name might have been Ken Smith. I think Lobree is gone until about the 12th of October, so he is not much help at the moment. It was said to be a very good program, as "Smith" had done an excellent job of organizing the Hetch Hetchy story; apparently service clubs and such were quite receptive to it.

Where are the slides? I never have had my hands on them. I am not sure, but I believe Ed Daubs has them. At least he had them the last I know, but he may have passed them on to someone else. But don't tell him I told you about it, or he will immediately assume a negative attitude (even more so than usual) and disclaim any knowledge of what you are talking about. Since he thinks we should not be opposing the dams, he probably destroyed the slide set. Since he is (at least in name) ~~Knox~~ Conservation Education Chairman, it would be only logical for him to have the slide set. Work that angle. "People" suggested to you that he probably had the set.

Failing to locate the slide set, consider a movie. You can get films from the county library. They have the S.C. Grand Canyon film, for one. (we gave it to them). Ask at the branch library in Coalinga how to get these films; maybe they have one of the printed lists showing what is available.

Write Bob Owen telling him it is imperative that you have a quantity of membership application blanks, and also some informational brochures about the club. Be prepared to have the ladies pick these up before and after your program.

It would probably be well to allow for a question and answer period either before or after the program.

Of course it's also a good opportunity to set out propaganda of various types. You don't have to talk about all of it; just

set it out where they can pick it up.

We will undoubtedly go to Pitman's on the 9th. He said he sent you one of the maps to find his house. Are ~~g~~ you going? If so, we could go together, maybe meeting in Fresno first. On second thought (and a look at the map) I guess it would be out of your way.

We are on our way to Tuolumne Mdns to meet Barbara Johnson and her sister. Bob Henley and his wife are to show up around noon Saturday. This will work out well, I think, as it will give me a chance to talk to Barbara and make sure she gets her feet on the ground. I am assuming Marsh will let her run the whole show. I guess he can let the birdwatchers talk about whatever it is they talk about prior to 8:00 pm, and then Barbara will arrive and everyone will get down to brass ~~kxxx~~ tacks. It will be interesting to see whether the birdwatchers leave when we start talking about removing dams and lying in front of bulldozers.

Plan on Mount Clark. Upon looking at the map we decided it will be more enjoyable than Brewer, although probably less rewarding. (Next time we will shoot for spending the night on top of Brewer.) (I had not thought it possible before, but it now seems like it might work out ok.)

Sincerely,

George Whitmore

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

28 Jul 69

H. P. McClymonds
Fish Camp
California 93623

Dear Mr. McClymonds,

I have received copies of most of the correspondence, between yourself on the one hand and Mike McCloskey and Mark Massie on the other hand, regarding the problem of dogs in Yosemite.

As a result of your letters, I brought up the matter of dogs when I was talking with Superintendent Hadley recently. It turned out that he actually was not aware that dogs are prohibited from the Vernal Falls trail. He thought that being on a leash made it OK, even though the Yosemite regulations explicitly state otherwise, and there is a sign saying "No dogs" near the start of that trail. We discussed numerous topics, and consequently I was unable to pursue this particular issue in detail; thus I do not know what his attitude was regarding dogs on leashes in the back country. I would be rather unhappy if ~~he~~ it should develop that he thinks that, too, is OK. His main concern seemed to be with the problem of dogs not on leashes, and on this he expressed very strong feelings, and a determination to have the regulations enforced.

As Mike McCloskey did, I too would suggest that you write to the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service, since you apparently could not get a satisfactory response from the Yosemite administration. Of course you can also write to the Director of the NPS, or to the Secretary of the Interior. It seems preferable, however, to attempt to resolve the matter at a lower level, and to go to higher levels only if forced to.

Also, Norm Poitevin (our new Topics editor) has stated that he will publish letters to the editor. This seems like an ideal way for you to bring this particular matter to the attention of our members. I would suggest you write Norman a concise letter, the better to ensure that it be published in its entirety. Also, it seems you should explicitly request letters from our members to the Park Service or whomever you decide upon. Of course the Topics is seen by many people besides our members, and thus you would likely be applying some indirect pressure to the Yosemite administration in this way.

I am certainly glad to see that your interest in conservation matters is strong enough to cause you to try to do something about a particular problem. You would, perhaps, be amazed to

find how many members we have who simply pay their dues and then assume that someone else will take care of the problems. Unfortunately, that "someone else" seldom materializes, much to the glee of the loggers, dam builders, road contractors, and other purveyors of "progress".

The Sierra Club's unique strength has stemmed from its emphasis on member participation, meaning people such as yourself. If we sit back and wait for someone else to do the job at hand, we are forgetting this basic fact, and are thereby weakening the club and the cause of conservation.

One way in which you could be of great assistance would be to advise Marsh Pitman and/or Norm Poitevin regarding Yosemite matters, as I described in an article in the last (June) issue of the Topics. Because you live so close to the park, you are in a better position than most of us to learn of proposed developments, changes in regulations, problems of administration, etc. You could advise us of these, and perhaps include your own ideas or recommendations. This chapter will be sending its recommendations regarding Yosemite to the Board of Directors on the first of September, so you should contact Marsh ~~ex~~ and/or Norman immediately with your information and ideas. Marsh will be leaving on vacation within a week or so, so it might be safer to write Norman.

Of course the problems are never-ending, so we will look forward to hearing from you not only now but right along on a continuing basis in the future as well.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore
Conservation Chairman

cc. Mark Massie
Marsh Pitman
Norm Poitevin

free lance writer

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

23 Oct 69

King Harris
1250 Canada Road
Woodside
California 94062

Dear Mr. Harris:

*Sent copies of Mills Tower and Tehipite Yosemite
Master Plan state notes; also Tehipite
Sequoia - Kings master plan*

I hope the other material reached you in time. As I mentioned, you may keep it, as we have extra copies.

The enclosed article regarding an aerial tramway from the floor of Yosemite Valley to Glacier Point will appear in our chapter newsletter on November 1, approximately (possibly as late as November 3).

Consequently, since it will not become public information until then, you should use some discretion in whatever use you might choose to make of it. It should be safe to refer to the ideas expressed, including their sources, but I think it would be preferable to avoid actual quotations (unless anything you write would appear after the first few days of November).

This idea of aerial tramways seems very relevant to your thoughts about possible conflicts if the concessionaire becomes excessively profit-oriented.

Sincerely,

George W. Whitmore
Conservation Chairman
Tehipite Chapter
Sierra Club

cc. Bob Hackamack
Phil DeBoer

P. O. Box 485
Kingsburg
California 93631

25 Dec 69

Barbara Johnson
2259 E. Childs Avenue
Merced
California 95340

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for sending me the copy of Bob Hackamack's letter of 15 December in which he discusses the proposed wilderness boundary in the vicinity of the Sierra Club's Soda Springs property in Tuolumne Meadows.

As I understand it, he would like to have that portion of the Sierra Club property which includes the river and everything south of the river included in the wilderness.

I think we would all agree that this would be desirable. However, the terms of the Wilderness Act do not permit the inclusion of private property within its purview. Private property can be surrounded by lands of the National Wilderness Preservation System, but not included within it. Relevant portions of the Wilderness Act are quoted below.

Section 2.(a) ...a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally owned areas...

Section 2.(c) ...An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land...

Section 5.(a) In any case where...privately owned land is completely surrounded by...lands within areas designated by this Act as wilderness, such...private owner shall be given such rights as may be necessary to assure adequate access...

Section 5.(b) In any case where...valid occupancies are wholly within a...wilderness area, the Secretary...shall...permit ingress and egress to such surrounded areas...

The latter two references are cited to show that Congress intended that there would be inholdings, and that these were separate and distinct from the designated wilderness surrounding or adjoining them.

There is a description of the Soda Springs property in the January 1913 issue of the Sierra Club Bulletin (Vol. IX, pp: 36-39); this includes a map, also an excellent photo with boundaries drawn thereon--taken from the top of Lumbert Dome. This article states that the property consists of the southwest quarter of Sec. 5, T1S, R24E, and is 160 acres in extent. (There is a conflict here, as Section 5 is oversize, consequently the "southwest quarter" would be more than 160 acres.)

As you know, there have been discussions between the Club and the Yosemite administration regarding possible sale of the property to the government. Possibly we should contact Dick Pitman (Lodges & Lands) to see how the timing of such a transaction might affect wilderness classification.

Sincerely,

George Whitmore