



## Tenaya Lake Area Plan

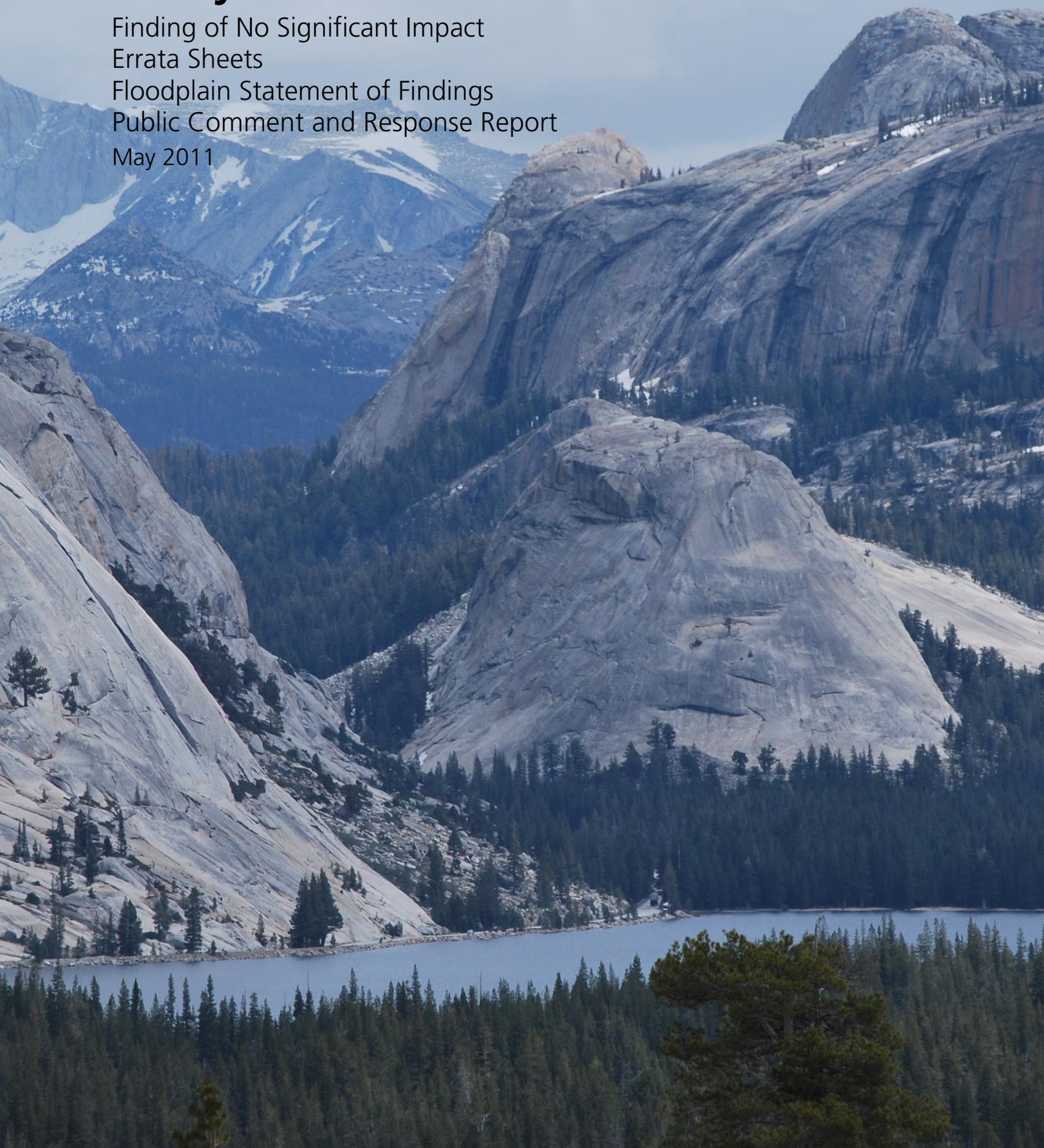
Finding of No Significant Impact

Errata Sheets

Floodplain Statement of Findings

Public Comment and Response Report

May 2011







**United States Department of the Interior**  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

Yosemite National Park  
P. O. Box 577  
Yosemite, California 95389

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
H3823 (YOSE-PM)

Dear Friends of Yosemite National Park:

We are pleased to provide you with a copy of the *Finding of No Significant Impact for the Tenaya Lake Area Plan*. This document records the decision of the National Park Service to restore and protect resources while providing opportunities for appropriate high-country visitor experiences at Tenaya Lake, as described under the Selected Alternative (Modified Alternative 2) in the *Tenaya Lake Area Plan Environmental Assessment*. This packet also contains Errata Sheets, a *Floodplain Statement of Findings*, and the *Tenaya Lake Area Plan Public Comment and Response Report*.

The National Park Service has determined that implementation of the Tenaya Lake Area Plan will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

We thank you for your comments regarding the project. Public participation is a key element in the environmental review process at Yosemite National Park. Your participation helps to ensure that the National Park Service fully understands and considers your values and concerns.

Sincerely,

Don L. Neubacher  
Superintendent

*(page intentionally left blank)*



## Tenaya Lake Area Plan

Finding of No Significant Impact

Errata Sheets

Floodplain Statement of Findings

Public Comment and Response Report

May 2011



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Finding of No Significant Impact</b> .....	<b>1-1</b>
Purpose and Need for Federal Action.....	1-1
Alternatives Analyzed .....	1-1
Alternatives Considered but Dismissed .....	1-5
Environmentally Preferred Alternative .....	1-6
Endangered Species Act (ESA) .....	1-7
National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).....	1-7
Why the Selected Alternative will not have a Significant Effect on the Quality of the Human Environment.....	1-8
Cumulative Impacts .....	1-8
Mitigation.....	1-9
Public Involvement, Consultation, and Coordination.....	1-18
Consultation and Coordination.....	1-21
Non-Impairment of Park Resources.....	1-22
Conclusion.....	1-22
Recommended .....	1-23
Approved.....	1-23
<b>Errata Sheets</b> .....	<b>2-1</b>
<b>Floodplain Statement of Findings</b> .....	<b>3-1</b>
Introduction.....	3-3
Floodplain Extent .....	3-4
General Characteristics of Flooding in the Area .....	3-5
Justification for Use of the Floodplain .....	3-7
Description of Site-Specific Flood Risk.....	3-7
Design or Modifications to Minimize Harm to Floodplain Values or Risks to Life and Property.....	3-8
<b>Public Comment and Response Report</b> .....	<b>4-1</b>
Introduction.....	4-1
Public Comment Analysis Methodology.....	4-1
Using this Report .....	4-2
Comments and Responses.....	4-3
Out of Scope Comments .....	4-19

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1-1. Modifications to Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence) ..... 1-2  
Table 1-2. Mitigation Measures..... 1-9

# TENAYA LAKE AREA PLAN

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Yosemite National Park  
March 2011

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents the decision of the National Park Service (NPS) to adopt modification of Alternative 2 as the Tenaya Lake Area Plan in Yosemite National Park, California.

### PURPOSE AND NEED FOR FEDERAL ACTION

The purpose of the Tenaya Lake Area Plan is to guide management actions necessary for the National Park Service (NPS) in order to restore and protect resources while providing opportunities for appropriate high- country developed site visitor experiences at Tenaya Lake. For the purposes of the plan, the Tenaya Lake area has been divided into five distinct areas: Tioga Road; Sunrise Trailhead and Old Campground; Murphy Creek; East Beach; and South Trail. The description of alternatives in the EA includes a summary of the proposed ecological restoration, visitor uses, facilities, amenities, and improvements to be located within each of these areas. The impact analysis for each alternative addresses key issues and past problems, which demonstrate the need for taking the following action:

**Resource Impacts.** Existing trails traverse sensitive archeological resources. The East Beach trail and paved section of the Sunrise Trailhead interrupt hydrological patterns, including wetland habitat. The lack of wayfinding and interpretive materials has led to the creation of spur trails within sensitive resource areas (i.e., special- status vegetation, wetland habitat, and archeological resource deposits) and missed visitor opportunities and experiences. Evidence of visitor- adaptation to seasonal flooding includes spur trails and trail widening, which has resulted in vegetation and bank trampling, soil compaction, and erosion at East Beach and Sunrise Trailhead areas.

**Visitor Use.** Current issues include roadside parking congestion; unclear signage regarding parking areas, trails, use of watercraft, and facilities; missing connections between facilities and use areas; and no clear sense of arrival. Parking areas are not adequately sized or designed to effectively accommodate the range of vehicles (i.e., personal vehicles, recreational vehicles, trailers, shuttles, and tour buses). The Murphy Creek picnic area is poorly designed. The Tenaya Lake Campground was closed circa 1980 due to poor site selection, seasonal flooding, and water quality and sewage problems associated with a high water table.

**Visitor Safety.** Key visitor safety issues include no crosswalks, lack of adequate paths between the Sunrise Trailhead and Murphy Creek areas, and close proximity of pedestrians to moving traffic on Tioga Road. The current design of parking areas creates potential safety hazards including ingress and egress on blind curves, and undesignated shuttle/tour bus areas.

### ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED

The NPS analyzed five alternatives in the *Tenaya Lake Area Plan Environmental Assessment* (EA). These included Alternative 1: No Action Alternative; Alternative 2: Tenaya Confluence; Alternative 3: Tenaya Ecotones; Alternative 4: Lake Loop; and, Alternative 5: Immersive Nodes. Based on this

*Finding of No Significant Impact*

analysis, in the EA the NPS identified Alternative 2 as the Agency’s preferred and Environmentally Preferred Alternative.

**Selected Alternative**

Upon careful consideration of public comments in response to the EA, NPS has developed a Modified Alternative 2, which incorporates some elements of other alternatives analyzed in the EA, and addresses issues related to visitor experience and protection of resources. There are no substantive changes in terms of potential environmental consequences. All modifications to Alternative 2 are itemized in the table below:

**Table 1-1. Modifications to Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence)**

Description of Modification	Rationale for Modification
Reduce parking from 66 to 48 spaces at the proposed Sunrise Trailhead parking area, and provide roadside parking west of Sunrise Trailhead (north of Tioga Road).	Reduce the extent of the proposed Sunrise Trailhead parking area expansion and minimize ground disturbance and removal of vegetation.
Provide 35 additional defined and designated paved roadside pullouts (totaling 55 spaces) in appropriate non-sensitive tree cover, especially near restrooms or viewpoints where viewshed and resource issues are not a consideration.	Based on public comment on the EA and Preferred Alternative, additional roadside parking (including day-use and short-term) is an important aspect of the visitor experience. The Tenaya Lake Plan provides facilities accommodating varying visitor uses, including short viewing and photographic opportunities. The primary purpose of the plan is restoration and preservation of park resources; therefore additional roadside parking is proposed in areas where park resources would be not compromised.
Designate some roadside parking spaces as short-term pullouts for restroom stops, photo opportunities, or other short term activity.	
Provide short-term parking at the northeast corner of Tenaya Lake.	
Provide lake access for pedestrians carrying small watercraft via a delineated trail at Murphy Creek, connecting the parking area to the beach.	Based on public comment on the EA and Preferred Alternative, the Tenaya Lake Plan provides opportunities and access for a variety of uses, including small watercraft boating, while preserving and restoring natural and cultural resources.
No designated crossing at the Tenaya Lake inlet.	Reduce structural development where applicable to preserve park resources and natural character.
In the Murphy Creek area, include the two footbridges as described in Alternative 4 in lieu of the road-adjacent accessible path.	The grade at the road is considerably higher than the grade at the proposed Murphy Creek parking area, requiring a substantial structure to ensure that slopes don’t exceed 5% ADA requirement. Federal Highways and NPS are not currently planning to replace the Murphy Creek culverts, so to build the accessible path alongside the road, extension of the existing culverts would be necessary to accommodate the width of the proposed path. The experience of being on a pathway adjacent to the road is inferior to the experience of being on a pathway that travels through the trees, closer to the lake.

The Selected Alternative is Modified Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence). Modifications include adjustments to parking capacity (but not greater than capacity analyzed in under Alternative 5 in the EA) and incorporation of elements from Alternative 4, which are assessed in the EA. Modified Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence) includes an accessible trail along the northern edge of the lake between East Beach and Murphy Creek and within the East Beach, Murphy Creek, and Sunrise Trailhead areas. Many existing trails located within ecologically and culturally sensitive areas will be removed and restored to natural conditions. The approved course of action includes 9.7 acres of ecological restoration within areas currently affected by visitor use, creation of volunteer trails, and stormwater erosion. The trail systems around the lake and north of Tioga Road are to be realigned to avoid sensitive natural and cultural resources and support protection and restoration, and pedestrian bridges and boardwalks over waterways and wetland habitat are used to restore hydrological function of major waterways. Interpretive materials and improved connections to the trail along the southern edge of the lake and Sunrise and Murphy Creek trailheads are installed to facilitate wayfinding, minimize visitor confusion, and reduce the potential for volunteer trails and subsequent adverse effects to natural and cultural resources. Visitor parking capacity will not exceed 232 spaces, including 177 spaces within designated lots south of Tioga Road 40 designated roadside spaces north and south of Tioga Road, and 15 undesignated spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road near East Beach. Roadside parking includes designated long and short-term spaces. The approved course of action does not include any development of new campground facilities.

The modified selected alternative includes the following elements, which were common to all action alternatives:

- Ecological restoration will include revegetation and restoration of hydrological function and biological diversity in denuded areas. The pedestrian impact on natural areas will be reduced by removing or reorganizing and better delineating pathways. Ecological restoration will take place in areas that have been disturbed in the past, which may include areas where there has been abandoned infrastructure, removal of pavement, denuded and compacted soil, and soil erosion. Ecological restoration may include temporary closure of designated areas.
- Modifications to designated parking areas and roadside parking on the southern side of Tioga Road will be made. Existing, undesignated parking (not more than 15 spaces) on the northern side of Tioga Road is retained.
- A picnic area will be located adjacent to the southeastern edge of the East Beach parking area. Existing facilities will be relocated within the East Beach area and improved. Several groups of picnic tables are retained under the trees at the beach area similar to what currently exists. Pedestrian/boardwalk crossings over wetland areas consist of 15-foot long wood/steel crossings with concrete footings.
- An existing asbestos water pipe extending from a non-operating well near the East Beach parking area along the southern edge of Tioga Road to Sunrise Trailhead is to be removed, but the existing well remains in place.
- The vault toilet located closest to the lake in the Murphy Creek area is to be removed and replaced by a new toilet in an upgradient location outside of seasonally flooded areas.
- Drainage facilities and infrastructure include installation of new culverts as a part of parking area, trail, and roadside improvements. Strategies such as using vegetation and strategic boulder cluster placement to dissipate hydrologic energy will be employed to improve

### *Finding of No Significant Impact*

existing culvert performance where erosion patterns and other related issues occur. Culvert outlets retrofitted with energy dissipation strategies will disperse concentrated flows and mitigate erosion at those points.

- Biofiltration will be constructed within and surrounding each parking area. Along Tioga Road between Sunrise Trailhead and Murphy Creek, an approximately 8,000- square foot linear biofiltration area will be located between the south edge the road and the pedestrian path. Between Murphy Creek and East Beach, a 7,870- square foot, linear biofiltration area will be created between the south edge of Tioga Road and the pedestrian path.
- The existing speed limit on Tioga Road is reduced from 35 to 25 miles per hour (mph) within the Tenaya Lake area. Signage and traffic calming devices will alert visitors of the change. Modifications within the road surface will not impact snow removal operations.
- A delineated shuttle stop is to be installed at each major node, coupled with strategies for vehicle speed reduction and safety of pedestrian crossing at these shuttle areas.
- As minimal as possible signage will be informative, interpretive, and directional. Signage on Tioga Road includes a gateway sign or element both east and west of the lake area; parking, amenity, and trailhead signs; and notification of the speed reduction zone (25 mph). Temporary signage may be installed during restoration actions.
- Three general classes of trail types are as follows: rustic, stabilized, and accessible. Pedestrian bridges and boardwalks will improve pedestrian access and avoid sensitive habitat areas.
- The range of allowable day- use activities does not change from current conditions (with the exception of lit fires in grills and fire pits).

### **Other Alternatives Evaluated**

Under the No Action Alternative, the Tenaya Lake area would not be improved, except for continuation of existing restoration projects, emergency repairs, and routine and periodic maintenance activities. Designated and undesignated parking would remain uncontrolled (space for 411 standard vehicles) and a reduction in roadside parking area is not proposed. The No Action Alternative would continue to result in routine repair and maintenance actions, including removal of vault toilet waste, trash, and recyclables; road and culvert maintenance, hazard tree abatement; and snow removal.

Alternative 3 (Tenaya Ecotones) would restore 9.8 acres to natural conditions, reduce Tioga Road southern roadside parking to 15 spaces, include an accessible trail between Murphy Creek and East Beach, relocate the Murphy Creek trail and construct a bridge over Murphy Creek north of Tioga Road, and remove culverts and construct a combined vehicular/pedestrian bridge at the Tioga Road/Murphy Creek crossing.

Alternative 4 (Lake Loop) would restore 6.0 acres to natural conditions; eliminate roadside parking on the southern side of Tioga Road; include an accessible trail from the Sunrise Trailhead, along the western side of the lake, to the northern extent of the South Trail; and include a bridge crossing over the Tenaya Lake outlet..

Alternative 5 (Immersive Nodes) would restore 9.6 acres to natural conditions, retain 74 designated roadside parking spaces along Tioga Road, include the development of 10 primitive campsites on the

northern side of Tioga Road, relocate the Murphy Creek trail and construct a bridge over Murphy Creek north of Tioga Road, and remove culverts and construct a 25- foot vehicular bridge at the Tioga Road/Murphy Creek Crossing. Under all alternatives, approximately 15 undesignated parking spaces along the northern side of Tioga Road would remain.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED**

The comprehensive alternatives development process, which involved public and NPS staff input over a two- year period, included preliminary consideration of several site and design alternatives that were dismissed from full analysis in the EA for the following reasons: (1) they were technically or economically infeasible; (2) they did not meet the purpose and need; (3) they conflicted with other park policies and goals; and/or (4) they would have unacceptable levels of environmental impacts. These are as follows:

Under a concept to retain roadside parking, designated parking would have been provided to meet the observed peak physical roadside parking estimate (277 vehicles). This option was dismissed because the goals of the project include improved visitor safety, visitor experience, and protection of cultural and natural resources. Allowing roadside parking to remain would not resolve key issues including traffic congestion, poor roadway visibility for both drivers and pedestrians, close proximity of pedestrians to vehicles, water quality concerns due to erosion and vehicle- related pollutants, and impacts to adjacent natural and cultural resources. Providing for expanded parking areas meeting the current observed peak estimate would result in impacts to special- status plant species, vegetation, wetland habitat, and archeological resources.

Re- establishing 50 campsites, which were removed due to adverse impacts to water quality, was initially considered. Based on further study of the lake and surrounding natural and cultural resources, the area's significant and important features pose a major constraint for the siting of campsites. Primary issues include significant archeological resources, American Indian traditional and contemporary practices, site hydrology and flooding, impacts to water quality, special- status plant species, and jurisdictional wetland habitat. Creation of a large campsite at the lake would likely adversely affect these resources; therefore, this concept was considered but dismissed. An alternative concept including 10 campsites within a less constrained area was identified and carried forward in the analysis.

Several preliminary variations of the action alternatives evaluated in the EA included trail re-alignments, infrastructure, and parking area footprints different than the selected action alternatives. These variations were carefully reviewed by NPS resource experts, facility and maintenance staff, and rangers during working charettes (interactive workshops). Input from these experts was reviewed and discussed by the NPS internal review team, the project manager and NEPA compliance specialist, Yosemite Conservancy liaison, and design team. Design options that would adversely affect cultural and natural resources, present operational conflicts with facility and maintenance staff, or conflict with park management policies were dismissed.

## **Decision Rationale**

Action is warranted at this time because of the need to protect and restore natural and cultural resources at Tenaya Lake, address visitor safety issues, improve visitor enjoyment, prescribe appropriate visitor capacity, improve visitor accessibility, and provide effective interpretive and wayfinding signage and materials. Because of its remarkable scenic qualities, its inviting blue water, and its proximity to Tioga Road, Tenaya Lake is one of the most popular destinations for summer

### *Finding of No Significant Impact*

visitors in Yosemite. The Tenaya Lake Area Plan incorporates ecological restoration programs to restore and protect identified sensitive habitats and hydrologic functions. The plan re-locates trail systems and visitor amenities to reduce the effects of visitor use within sensitive areas while providing diverse opportunities for visitor experience and improving park operations. Delineated and designated parking areas are provided to reduce the effects of uncontrolled parking on park resources and minimize potential roadside hazards.

The Selected Alternative will result in the greatest benefit to natural and cultural resources, will the greatest improvement to public safety, and will provide the greatest diversity in visitor experiences.

## **ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**

CEQ Regulations, implementing the NEPA and the NPS NEPA guidelines, require that “the alternative or alternatives which were considered to be environmentally preferable” be identified (CEQ Regulations, Section 1505.2). Environmentally preferable is defined as “the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in the NEPA Section 101. This means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative that best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources” (CEQ 1981).

Section 101 of NEPA states that it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to... (1) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; (2) assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings; (3) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; (4) preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice; (5) achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities; and (6) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

The NPS has considered all alternatives in this analysis in accordance with NEPA and CEQ Regulations (40 CFR 1502.14 and 40 CFR 1505.2) and has determined that the Selected Modified Alternative: Tenaya Confluence is the Environmentally Preferred Alternative. After review of potential impacts, and developing mitigation measures, the Selected Alternative achieves the greatest balance between (1) assure for all generations safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings; (2) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; and (3) preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice.

Alternative 3: Tenaya Ecotones would provide similar benefits to wetlands, vegetation, wildlife, and visitor experience. However, this alternative would result in greater impacts to hydrology and Wilderness experience due to structural development within seasonally flooded areas and the Wilderness zone. This Alternative includes additional structural crossings including improved stepping stones at the Tenaya Lake outlet, and a bridge over Murphy Creek within Wilderness. This Alternative would not best preserve important historic, cultural, or natural aspects of our national heritage.

Alternative 4: Lake Loop would provide similar benefits to wetlands, vegetation, wildlife, and visitor experience. However, this alternative would result in greater impacts to hydrology as a result of structural development within seasonally flooded areas. This Alternative proposes the greatest level of structural development, including an accessible trail parallel along the southern edge of Tioga Road, and bridges over the Tenaya Lake inlet and outlet. This Alternative would not best preserve important historic, cultural, or natural aspects of our national heritage.

Alternative 5: Immersive Nodes would provide similar benefits to wetlands, vegetation, and visitor experience. However, this alternative would result in greater impacts to hydrology, wildlife, soundscapes, and Wilderness experience. This Alternative includes the highest level of parking capacity (251 spaces), includes a ten-space camping area north of the Sunrise Trailhead area, and would locate bridge structures and improvements within the Murphy Creek alluvial fan and seasonally flooded areas. This Alternative would not best preserve important historic, cultural, or natural aspects of our national heritage.

The No Action Alternative would perpetuate risks to public health and safety, and would not provide a high level of protection for natural and cultural resources.

## **ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA)**

The NPS made the determination of effect for the Selected Alternative following guidance outlined in the 1998 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) *and National Marine Fisheries Service Endangered Species Act Consultation Handbook: Procedures for Conducting Section 7 Consultations and Conference Activities Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act*. NPS determined that the Selected Alternative is not likely to adversely affect any federally listed, candidate or proposed species or their designated or proposed critical habitat.

## **NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT (NHPA)**

The NPS made the determination of effect of the Selected Alternative on historic properties pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in accordance with the *1999 Park Programmatic Agreement Among the National Park Service at Yosemite, the California State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Planning, Design, Construction, Operations and Maintenance, Yosemite National Park, California* (1999 PA). For the purpose of NEPA and NPS policy, an impact to a historic property that is eligible or listed under the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) would be considered significant if an adverse effect could not be resolved in agreement with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), American Indian tribal governments, or other consulting and interested parties and the public. The 1999 PA included standard mitigation measures to resolve adverse effects. No objections from the public were received and the SHPO concurred with the determination of effect.

The NPS has determined that implementation of the Selected Alternative will have “no adverse effect” on archaeological, historical, or traditional cultural properties. Components of the Selected Alternative would be designed to avoid or minimize impacts to historic properties, pursuant to the 1999 Programmatic Agreement.

## **WHY THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE QUALITY OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

The NPS analyzed the significance criteria provided in the CEQ's NEPA Regulations (Section 1508.27) to determine if the Selected Alternative would have a significant adverse effect on the human environment. The Selected Alternative will minimize visual, cultural, social, and natural resource impacts to the Tenaya Lake area, while improving visitor safety, visitor experience, and park operations. Beneficial impacts will include: local, long- term, negligible, beneficial impact on socioeconomics; local, longer- term minor beneficial impacts on geology and soils, hydrology, vegetation, wildlife, scenic resources, and land use; local, long- term, minor to moderate beneficial impact on visitor experience; and, local, long- term, moderate, beneficial impacts on wetlands, park operations, and transportation. The Selected Alternative would have no long- term effect on special-status species. Adverse impacts will include: local long- term, negligible, adverse impacts on night sky, Wilderness, and American Indian traditional cultural practices; and, local, long- term, minor, adverse impact on air quality, and soundscapes.

Actions within Wilderness are limited to re- construction and restoration of a portion of the Murphy Creek Trail. Use of hand- powered tools will avoid or minimize generation of noise and dust. While visitors would likely notice the activities, the activities will be short- term, and limited to the trailhead area, and will not impact Wilderness experience in the backcountry areas. The short- term impact will be negligible. The reduction in parking areas may limit the available parking for overnight use during peak visitor use periods, resulting in an adverse impact to Wilderness users. Overall, proposed parking areas, wayfinding and interpretive materials, and facilities provide for improved visitor experience, including those stationing at Tenaya Lake while accessing Wilderness and backcountry areas. While the proposed rumble strips may increase the ambient noise level by no more than five decibels adjacent to Tioga Road, the sound will attenuate due to distance and intervening topography, and the impact will be negligible.

The Selected Alternative will incorporate design features and implement standard mitigation measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects on historic properties.

Based on the analysis of the context and intensity of each impact, and implementation of mitigation measures (refer to table below), none of the ten significance criteria identified in CEQ Section 1508.27 are triggered.

### **HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Implementation of the Selected Alternative will have no adverse effect on archeological or traditional cultural properties, historic sites, structures, and landscapes. The National Park Service will implement design features and standard mitigation measures detailed below to avoid or minimize impacts to historic properties.

### **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Significant cumulative impacts were not identified for any impact topic. Also, no highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, or elements of precedence have been identified. Implementing the Selected Alternative will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental laws.

## MITIGATION

The following mitigation measures will be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts to natural and cultural resources.

**Table 1-2. Mitigation Measures**

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility	Critical Milestones
<b>Construction Mitigation Measures</b>	The Construction Contractor shall prepare a Health and Safety Plan to address all aspects of Contractor health and safety issues compliant with OSHA standards and other relevant regulations. The Plan shall be submitted for park review and approval prior to construction.	Contractor	Prior to project activities
	An Oil and Hazardous Materials Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan shall be prepared by the Construction Contractor for the project to address hazardous materials storage, spill prevention, and response. The Plan shall include a schedule for regular inspections and maintenance of vehicles and equipment to reduce the potential for leaks and spills. The Plan shall be submitted for park review and approval prior to construction.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Prior to project activities
	A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be prepared by the Construction Contractor and implemented for construction activities to control surface run-off, reduce erosion, and prevent sedimentation from entering water bodies during construction. The SWPPP shall be submitted for park review and approval prior to construction.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Prior to project activities
	The NPS shall apply for and comply with all federal and state permits required for construction-related activities, including a Section 404 Nationwide Permit from USACE, a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from RWQCB, and a Section 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFG for project-related impacts that will occur in areas under the jurisdiction of these regulatory agencies.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to project activities
	NPS shall prepare and implement an engineered plan for all bridge structures, footings, drainage management, and culverts. The plan shall address geologic, hydrologic, and climatic factors, including underlying soils and foundation requirements, waterway flow patterns and rates, and snow and ice accumulation.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to project activities

*Finding of No Significant Impact*

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility	Critical Milestones
	<p>Construction plans shall include a site-specific Revegetation Plan. The plan shall be implemented in all disturbed areas. The plan shall include the use of native species from the local gene pool, and shall specify soil preparation, native seed/plant mixes, and mulching for all areas disturbed by construction activities. Weed and seed-free mulch shall be used to minimize the potential for invasive species introduction.</p> <p>Bank restoration shall incorporate the use of local willow (<i>Salix</i> spp.) pole cuttings as followed: The three to four-foot deep planted poles sprout at nodes along the length of the cuttings thus creating a dense matrix of roots in disturbed stream bank soils. These poles are planted in a grid pattern from the toe up the bank to an elevation rise of eight feet. This insures that the planted pole ends are in the ground water table nearly year round. The poles are planted alone or interwoven with horizontally planted willow brush layers near the toe of the bank. The pole cuttings are planted utilizing a "hydrodrill" in a grid pattern spacing of 1.5 feet apart. The hydrodrill consists of a high pressure water pump and a three-quarter inch diameter galvanized pipe water wand which is four feet long. The cuttings are inserted after the pressurized stream of water bores a three foot deep by one inch diameter hole. A two-foot top of the cutting is left above ground and will leaf out in the spring of the following year.</p>	<p>Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor</p>	<p>Prior to project activities</p>
	<p>Construction plans shall include a noxious weed abatement program including measures ensuring that: vehicles and equipment arrive on site free of mud or seed-bearing material, and all imported top soil (for use in the top twelve inches of the final grade), plant, seed, and straw materials brought onto the site are weed-free. Noxious weeds shall be mapped, and the program shall identify methods of weed-control (e.g., hand-pulling, tilling, mowing, use of herbicides, use of herbivores).</p>	<p>Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor</p>	<p>Prior to project activities</p>
	<p>The park shall develop a Visitor Outreach and Communications Strategy Plan to alert necessary park and Concessionaire employees, residents and visitors to pertinent elements of the construction work schedule.</p>	<p>Yosemite National Park, Project Manger</p>	<p>Prior to project activities</p>
	<p>Supervisory construction personnel shall attend an Environmental Protection briefing provided by the park prior to working on site. This briefing is designed to familiarize workers with statutory and contractual environmental requirements and the recognition of and protection measures for archeological sites, sensitive habitats, water resources, and wildlife habitats.</p>	<p>Yosemite National Park, Project Manger</p>	<p>Prior to project activities</p>
	<p>The Contractor shall establish a "Minimum Disturbance Protocol" for activities at all sites that includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Clearly defined access routes that have been established through coordination with NPS biologists.</li> <li>b. Minimizes impacts to or removal of rock substrates.</li> </ol>	<p>Contractor</p>	<p>Prior to project activities</p>

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility	Critical Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Limits tree removal or trimming to those trees within parking and facility development areas.</li> <li>d. Stockpiles and reapplies native topsoil, where grading is necessary.</li> <li>e. Minimizes soils compaction and erosion.</li> <li>f. Minimizes the removal of woody debris or other ground cover.</li> </ul>		
	<p>Protective barriers (e.g., brightly colored construction fencing) shall be placed around areas adjacent to the project area that require special attention as identified by the park, such as specified staging areas, trees, plants, root zones, creek edges, aquatic habitats, wetlands, sensitive wildlife habitats, cultural resource features, and infrastructure to remain. Ropes, cables, or fences shall not be fastened to trees. Barriers shall be installed prior to construction and field inspected by natural and cultural resource personnel to verify proper placement.</p>	<p>Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor</p>	<p>Prior to project activities</p>
	<p>Construction Contractor shall ensure that any imported soils, fills, or aggregates are free of deleterious materials. Sources of imported materials shall be compiled by Construction Contractor and submitted for park review and approval prior to construction.</p>	<p>Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor</p>	<p>Prior to project activities</p>
	<p>The Underground Services Alert (USA) shall be informed by construction personnel 72 hours prior to any ground disturbance to enable Valley Utilities staff to verify the on site location and depth (elevation) of all existing utilities and services through field survey (potholing).</p>	<p>Contractor</p>	<p>Prior to project activities</p>
	<p>Grading operations using manual or heavy equipment shall follow industry-standard stabilization methods. After grading is complete, backfill compaction and related operations shall be initiated as soon as possible to establish and maintain stable soil surfaces. Soil surfaces shall be treated and restoration within approved NPS guidelines and specifications shall be performed.</p>	<p>Contractor</p>	<p>Prior to and concurrent with project activities</p>
	<p>The Construction Contractor shall implement and comply with all requirements of the Oil and Hazardous Materials Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan prepared and approved for the project.</p>	<p>Contractor</p>	<p>Concurrent with project activities</p>
	<p>The Construction Contractor shall implement and comply with all operational compliance required by the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) issued for the project.</p>	<p>Contractor</p>	<p>Concurrent with project activities</p>
	<p>The Construction Contractor shall implement and comply with the requirements of the Revegetation Plan.</p>	<p>Contractor</p>	<p>Concurrent with project activities</p>
	<p>The Construction Contractor shall implement and comply with the requirements of the noxious weed abatement program.</p>	<p>Contractor</p>	<p>Concurrent with project activities</p>

*Finding of No Significant Impact*

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility	Critical Milestones
	Construction activities shall be monitored by qualified park natural and cultural resource specialists to ensure proper compliance with the implementation of mitigation measures, and that the project remains within the parameters of NEPA and National Historic Preservation Act compliance documents, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits, and other applicable permits or permit conditions. Compliance monitoring would ensure adherence to mitigation measures and would include reporting protocols. NPS shall inspect the project to ensure that impacts stay within the parameters of the project and do not escalate beyond the scope of the environmental assessment, as well as to ensure that the project conforms to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements and Water Quality Certification, and other applicable permits or project conditions.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manger	Concurrent with project activities
	Construction waste shall be separated into recyclable materials, green waste, and other debris that shall be placed in refuse containers daily and disposed of weekly. Recycled, toxic-free, and environmentally sensitive materials, equipment, and products shall be utilized whenever possible. Burning or burying of waste is strictly prohibited.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	Wastewater contaminated with silt, grout, or other by-products from construction activities shall be contained in a holding or settling tank to prevent contaminated material from entering watercourses or wetlands.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	Hazardous or flammable chemicals shall be prohibited from storage in staging areas, except for those substances identified in the Oil and Hazardous Materials Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan. Hazardous waste materials shall be immediately removed from project site in approved containers.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	Machinery and equipment shall be parked over containment pads designed to trap any leaking oil, fuel, or hydraulic fluids and inspected daily.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	Secondary containment shall be required for all fuel storage. Routine oiling, lubrication, and refueling shall be conducted with secondary containment and is prohibited within 100 feet of water courses or wetlands at any time.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	Spill response materials including absorbent pads, booms, and other materials to contain hazardous material spills shall be maintained on the project site to ensure rapid response to spills.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	The Park Project Manager shall be immediately notified of all spills or releases of hazardous materials. Any spill release shall be digitally photographed or videotaped as part of response activities.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	Disruption of utility service will require advanced notification to the park, concessionaire, and residents prior to scheduled disruptions. Unexpected interruptions due to construction activities shall promptly be reconnected.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility	Critical Milestones
	All construction tools and equipment entering the park shall be cleaned by means of pressure washing and/or steam cleaning to arrive on-site free of mud or seed-bearing material. Each piece of equipment shall undergo inspections immediately prior to entry of the park.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	Clearing of vegetation and ground disturbance shall be minimized to the greatest extent possible.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	Topsoil shall be salvaged, segregated during storage, and reused in the proper location and depth. Wetland soils shall be salvaged and reused as fill in wetland areas. Stockpiles of soils infected with fungal pathogens (root rot) must not be moved and reused in non-infected areas of the park. Equipment buckets, tires, and hand tools used in areas containing root rot shall be cleaned prior to removal.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	A Construction Contractor representative shall be designated to monitor the worksite daily for proper disposal of waste, wrappers, and food packaging.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	All tools, equipment, barricades, signs, surplus materials, debris, and rubbish shall be removed by the Construction Contractor from the project work limits upon project completion.	Contractor	Upon completion of project activities
	Vehicle or equipment tracks shall be raked out or eradicated and revegetated after construction activities to reduce visual impact.	Contractor	Upon completion of project activities
	The park will monitor the success of the Revegetation Plan. Plant materials used for revegetation shall remain alive and in a healthy, vigorous condition for a period of one year after final acceptance of planting. The project site shall be monitored by qualified park personnel.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Upon completion of project activities
<b>Geology, Geohazards, and Soils</b>	Construction plans shall identify areas susceptible to rockfall. Construction and trail crews shall be educated regarding this potential hazard, and shall comply with standard safety and protection measures (e.g., use of hard hats, placement of temporary protection fencing, netting, or barriers).	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to site disturbance
	Interpretive signage shall include standard information regarding areas susceptible to rockfall, including Tioga Road and the South Trail.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Concurrent with project activities
<b>Wetlands</b>	Construction plans shall identify the boundaries of wetland features, and shall show the location of a silt fence along the perimeter of staging and work areas located outside of wetland features. The plans shall clearly show the silt fence as being located in previously developed substrates and shall include details for proper silt fence installation. The silt fence shall create a continuous barrier between the staging and work areas and the wetland features.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Prior to project activities
	All work activities shall be limited to the surface of the staging	Contractor	Concurrent

*Finding of No Significant Impact*

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility	Critical Milestones
	and work areas. All stockpiles, equipment storage, and materials storage shall be prohibited within the wetland features.		with project activities
	The silt fence shall remain in place and functional throughout the duration of work activities.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	If surface water is present with Murphy Creek, or other drainages, during culvert removal and construction, and bridge construction, the park shall prepare and implement a dewatering and diversion plan. Water pump intakes shall be completely screened with wire mesh not larger than 0.2 inch to prevent Yosemite toad and other aquatic wildlife from entering the pump system. Water shall be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to avoid scour and sedimentation. The methods and materials used in any dewatering (diversion) will be determined by the NPS biologist, in consultation with regulatory agencies (i.e., USFWS, USACE, RWQCB, SWRCB). Upon completion of construction activities, any diversions or barriers to flow shall be removed in a manner that would allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate. Alteration to the streambed will be minimized to the maximum extent practical. Any imported material will be removed from the streambed upon completion of construction activities within the waterway.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	The park shall develop and implement a Wetland Habitat Mitigation Monitoring Plan, which identifies areas temporarily and permanently impacted by grading, vegetation removal, and site development. Wetlands, creeks, waterways, and other waters affected by temporary disturbance and culvert removal shall be revegetated and restored. Wetlands, creeks, waterways, and other waters permanently affected shall be mitigated at a minimum 2:1 ratio, to ensure "no net loss." The plan shall include the use of native species from the local gene pool, and shall specify soil preparation, native seed/plant mixes, and shall identify measures for long-term maintenance and monitoring by park resource staff.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to project activities
<b>Wildlife</b>	A construction work schedule shall be prepared by the Construction Contractor for the project that minimizes effects on wildlife in adjacent habitats, peaks in visitation, and noise levels. If feasible, construction activities requiring work within aquatic habitats and tree removal shall be scheduled outside of seasonal, sensitive periods (i.e., amphibian breeding season within aquatic areas, bird nesting season, bat hibernation, and maternal roosting). The work schedule shall be submitted for park review and approval prior to construction.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Prior to construction
	In the event construction work is required during night-time hours, controls on construction equipment shall be used to minimize the effects of noise and lighting on wildlife species. Noise controls may include, but not be limited to: manually-adjustable back-up alarms, use of rubber gaskets, use of bottom dump trucks, use of exhaust mufflers, use of noise tent or	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Concurrent with project activities

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility	Critical Milestones
	barrier around areas requiring use of a jack hammer, and avoidance of unnecessary truck and equipment idling. Light sources shall be controlled by the use of shields to focus light within construction areas and minimize off-site glare.		
	Excavation sites and piping materials shall be monitored or covered to avoid trapping wildlife and routes of escape should be maintained. If a trench must remain open, small ramps shall be installed at regular intervals to allow for wildlife to escape. The construction site shall be inspected daily for appropriate covering and flagging of excavation sites. Each morning the project area shall be inspected for wildlife trapped in excavation pits and piping materials. A qualified biologist shall be available to inspect all excavations before refilling occurs.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
<b>Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species</b>	Populations of slender lupine shall be marked for protection by temporary fencing or clear flagging. Grading, construction, and staging activities shall avoid slender lupine plant populations.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	Restoration and revegetation activities within special-status plant populations shall be supervised by NPS resource specialists to ensure that actions do not result in disturbance, trampling, or uprooting of sensitive species.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	Natural features with obvious high value to wildlife shall be preserved, such as known breeding and roosting sites, large diameter tree snags, overhead cover, root masses, live branches, and multi-layered vegetation.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	If ground disturbing or tree removal activities are to occur during the typical nesting bird season (February through September), pre-disturbance nesting bird surveys shall be conducted. Nesting bird surveys shall be conducted within the immediate project footprint and all suitable habitats within 500 feet of the project footprint. If nesting birds (common or special-status) are identified, construction activities within 100 feet of the nest (500 feet if raptor) shall be delayed until the nestlings have fledged. If surveys conducted immediately prior to construction do not reveal any nesting bird species present within the project area, the action shall begin within three days to prevent the destruction of any nesting birds that may move into the area after the survey.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	If ground disturbing or tree removal activities are to occur during the typical maternity roosting season, a roosting bat survey shall be conducted utilizing standard protocols (e.g., careful inspection of potentially occupied sites, night vision scopes, Anabat recordings, mist netting). If bats are utilizing the tree for a night or day roost, passive exclusion measures (netting or other deterrents) shall be employed to deter further roosting. If a natal roost is identified, all disturbing activities shall be avoided within 100 feet of the natal roosts.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	Pacific fisher and Sierra (American) marten surveys shall be conducted within the development footprint and a 500-foot buffer, and shall include inspection for essential habitat elements (e.g., downed logs, snags, hollow trees, etc.) or sign	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities

*Finding of No Significant Impact*

<b>Impact Topic</b>	<b>Mitigation Measure</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Critical Milestones</b>
	of these species. If individuals or active dens are identified, a 100-foot buffer/exclusion zone shall be established around the den. The park wildlife biologist shall be notified to determine the appropriate actions.		
	Construction activities within 100 feet of aquatic and meadow habitat shall be scheduled outside of the Yosemite toad breeding season (typically mid-April through mid-July). Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted to verify presence/absence of the species. In the event Yosemite toad is observed, a NPS biologist shall monitor ground disturbance and construction activities within aquatic and meadow habitats.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	Construction equipment, truck, and maintenance vehicle speeds shall be limited to 15 miles per hour on facility site access routes to minimize the potential for harm to Pacific fisher, Sierra marten, and other wildlife within the roadway.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
<b>Night Sky</b>	If required, construction lighting shall comply with the following standards: be low in height and illuminates only the intended area; shielded so that light is not directed skyward; fitted with bulbs or fluorescent tubes that provide only the light intensity required to meet security needs; and, Designed or installed to produce colors that minimize the potential for light pollution, such as using yellow light sources rather than white (yellow light scatters less in the atmosphere.	Contractor	During construction
<b>Scenic Resources</b>	Construction equipment and materials shall be consolidated in designated staging areas when not in operation, to limit the visual intrusion of construction equipment during non-work hours. Staging areas located outside of existing NPS maintenance yards shall be fenced to the maximum extent feasible to visually screen construction materials.	Contractor	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
<b>Air Quality</b>	Cover and/or seal stockpiles to minimize blowing dust or loss of debris.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	Truck and related construction equipment speeds in active construction areas shall be limited to 15 miles per hour. All park regulations and posted speed limits shall be strictly adhered to within the park boundaries.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	When hauling dry materials, truck beds shall be securely covered to prevent blowing dust or loss of debris.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	The Contractor shall maintain adequate dust suppression equipment, and shall use clean water to control excess airborne particulates at the staging area, access roads or trails, and all park roads leading to or from the site. Water shall not applied when construction caused dust is not present.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
<b>Soundscapes</b>	Hydraulic or electric-powered impact tools shall be used when feasible.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	All construction equipment shall be equipped with mufflers kept	Contractor	Concurrent

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility	Critical Milestones
	in proper operating condition.		with project activities
	Idling of motors shall be limited, except as necessary.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
	To the extent possible, all on-site noisy work above 76 dBA (such as the operation of heavy equipment) shall be conducted between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.	Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
<b>Wilderness</b>	Grading and construction activities associated with re-alignment of the Murphy Creek Trail and associated bridge over Murphy Creek (north of Tioga Road) within Wilderness shall be conducted using minimal tool methods. These methods consist of only the following: use of hand-powered tools, non-motorized equipment for ground disturbance and construction, and use of mules or horses to transport materials.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Concurrent with project activities
<b>Visitor Experience and Recreation</b>	Construction plans shall include measures to reduce effects of construction on visitor safety and experience. A barrier plan shall indicate locations and types of barricades to protect public health and safety during both work and non-work hours.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
<b>Transportation and Traffic</b>	The park shall develop and implement a comprehensive traffic control plan for park review/approval that complies with necessary U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration regulations.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager, Contractor	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
<b>Historic Properties</b>	The park shall adhere to the Park Programmatic Agreement Among the NPS at Yosemite, the California State Historical Preservation Officer, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Planning, Design, Construction, Operations, and Maintenance, Yosemite National Park, California (1999 PA) to mitigate adverse effects.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	Mitigation measures include avoiding impacts and designing new development to be compatible with surrounding historic resources. Standard mitigation measures, as defined in the 1999 PA, include photo documentation, salvage, and reevaluation of National Register status (updating National Register Nomination form).	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	A Cultural Resources Monitoring Plan shall be prepared by the park to ensure proper compliance with the implementation of cultural resource mitigation measures as described in this section and as stipulated in the 1999 Programmatic Agreement.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
	Undertake all treatments within historic landscapes in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.	Yosemite National Park, Project Manager	Prior to and concurrent with project activities
<b>American Indian Traditional</b>	Continue to consult with culturally associated American Indian tribes throughout the site-specific design process and project	Yosemite National Park,	Prior to and concurrent

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility	Critical Milestones
<b>Cultural Practices</b>	implementation to avoid or mitigate damage to American Indian traditional and contemporary resources.	Project Manager	with project activities

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, CONSULTATION, AND COORDINATION**

### **Public Scoping**

The formal public scoping period for the Tenaya Lake Area Plan was September 4 to October 18, 2008. The NPS provided information about the plan and the public scoping period through the following means:

1. A press release describing the intent to begin the public involvement process for the proposed plan was published by the Mariposa Gazette on August 29, 2008.
2. The scoping announcement was included in the Yosemite National Park Electronic Newsletter, which has about 7,000 subscribers.
3. The scoping announcement was included in the park’s Daily Report throughout the public scoping period.
4. The scoping period was announced via the park’s website.
5. The Area Plan’s fact sheet was made available at Visitor Centers within the park.
6. Information regarding the project was disseminated monthly at Yosemite National Park Open House held in the Yosemite Valley auditorium.
7. A public workshop/open house for the Tenaya Lake Plan was held on July 10, 2010.
8. Public site visits were conducted on August 11 and 28, 2010.

Invitations to the open house were included in the public scoping announcement and the Area Plan’s fact sheet. Twenty- five scoping responses (including emails and letters) were received during the public scoping period. These responses were carefully reviewed and individual ideas were identified and assigned a code according to the subject matter addressed. Analysis of the public responses generated 170 discrete ideas, which were grouped into 87 concern statements. The public concern statements were used to identify common themes expressed by individuals or groups requesting particular lines of action by the NPS.

The public concerns were then screened to determine whether a concern pertained to the purpose and need for this project and the level of action required by the park's interdisciplinary team and/or park management. The plan’s interdisciplinary team is composed of park specialists from a variety of backgrounds including recreation planning, resource management and science, wilderness, public information, environmental compliance, and visitor use/social science. The plan’s interdisciplinary team reviewed the concern statements and used them to aid in the

development of alternatives. Copies of public comment letters are documented in the project administrative record. Issues, concerns, and comments received include the following topics:

- Park planning process and policy
- Planning process and policy specific to the Tenaya Lake Area Plan
- Visitor services, amenities, and improvements
- Visitor use, visitor safety, and resource impacts
- Restoration of ecosystem processes
- Protection of water quality
- Preservation of scenic resources and visual quality
- Recreational and access opportunities and management
- Transportation and parking design and management
- Reduced transportation- related noise
- Sustainable park operations

All of the issues and concerns were considered in the planning process and/or were addressed in the EA except as follows (these issues and concerns were considered out of scope of this project because: 1) the issue was precluded by existing regulations and policies; or 2) the issue is considered under a separate planning process.

- Continue to develop the Yosemite Transportation Plan.
- Address the park- wide carrying capacity and create a reservation system.
- Establish user carrying capacity limits and enforce them at the entrance gates.
- Address the park- wide carrying capacity and limit access.
- Address the park- wide carrying capacity for areas accessible by car or by bus.
- Increase entrance fees for commercial buses to reduce congestion at Tenaya Lake.
- Designate the southeast beach of Tenaya Lake as "clothing optional."
- Re- locate Tioga Road away from the Tenaya Lake.

## **Public Review and Comment on the Environmental Assessment**

The *Tenaya Lake Area Plan EA* was released for public review on October 12, 2010, and the National Park Service (NPS) accepted comments through November 17, 2010. Notice of the availability of the document and upcoming review period was announced in a press release issued by the park on October 7, 2010, at which time it was published in the Daily Report on the park's website and Yosemite Planning Update newsletters. The press release was covered by the Mariposa Gazette on October 14, 2010. In addition, the press release was distributed via direct mailing, announcements in Yosemite Planning Update Newsletters, as well as in the following libraries: California State Library, University of California Davis Shields Library, El Portal Public Library, Groveland Public Library, Lee Vining Public Library, Mono County, Mariposa Public Library, Oakhurst Public Library, and Yosemite Valley Public Library. A formal presentation was held at the regularly scheduled Open House in Yosemite Valley on October 27, 2010, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., where park staff was available to provide copies of the EA and provide additional information about the proposed project. The NPS also held monthly open houses during 2009 and 2010 where park staff was available to answer questions and collect comments on the Tenaya Lake Area Plan and other projects. The National Park Service distributed approximately 76 hardcopies and 235 Compact Discs and

### *Finding of No Significant Impact*

hardcopies) of the EA to individuals and organizations that requested it. An electronic copy of the EA was also made available on the planning webpage and through the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) system.

During the public scoping process 13 comment letters were received from individuals and organizations via email, fax, and through the U.S. mail. Comments and issues provided by NPS staff, other consulting agencies, and in public scoping informed the alternatives development process and the analysis of potential project effects. No new substantive issues were surfaced; topics of concern were as follows:

- The principle objective of the Tenaya Lake Area Plan should be to preserve resources and substantially reduce vehicle clutter.
- Address parkwide transportation and visitor capacity issues in the Merced River Plan and Yosemite Valley before the Tenaya Lake Area Plan or removing visitor facilities and roadside parking.
- Incorporate the Tenaya Lake Area Plan into the Tuolumne Meadows planning process.
- Consider expanded parkwide shuttle service and other viable methods to provide visitor access while reducing vehicles, decreasing congestion, and providing a range of visitor experiences.
- Consider paving all roadside parking and installing left turn lanes to protect resources and improve safety.
- Ensure funding for the whole project to ensure implementation.
- Consider re- opening the Murphy Creek access road/boat launch.
- Consider alternative parking design to address backcountry, day use, and short- term uses.
- Consider bicycle facilities at Tenaya Lake.
- Consider maintaining current parking capacity.
- Consider shuttle stops at the Murphy Creek trailhead.
- Eliminate parking on eastbound Tioga Road.
- Consider a better location for campsites.
- Retain the Murphy Creek east picnic area.
- Provide an additional option for crossing Tenaya Creek to reduce adverse effects to wetlands.
- Consider appropriate methods for speed control that do not create noise.
- Reduce or relocate roadside parking without adverse effects to visitors.
- Restore the Old Campground area and west end of Tenaya Lake, and retain the western and southern end of the lake for pedestrian use only.
- Provide informal turnouts to allow for quick, spontaneous stops in scenic areas.
- Provide an opportunity for a quiet visitor experience at East Beach.

Some of the public comments received provided additional non- substantive information or requested additional clarification. The information and corrections has been added to the EA through Errata sheets, which were developed as technical attachments to the Tenaya Lake Area Plan Environmental Assessment. In addition, NPS developed a modification to Alternative 2. This modification represents careful consideration of public concerns, park resources, and visitor services, experience, and safety.

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

The NPS is consulting with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regarding the EA, wetlands delineation, and permit requirements necessary to implement proposed actions in the Tenaya Lake Area Plan EA, in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. USACE reviewed the EA and wetland delineation and requested further clarification regarding impacts to jurisdictional waters and proposed wetland restoration (Norton 2010). Additional information was provided to USACE, and wetland delineation project boundaries were discussed. Drainages along the South Trail were not delineated actions along the trail will be limited to trail maintenance. Supplemental materials were provided to USACE, including specific locations and acreage of wetland impacts (temporary and permanent) and restoration areas for each Action Alternative. Prior to restoration and construction and drainage repair in wetlands, NPS will obtain authorization and required permits from USACE.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Yosemite National Park consults with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office pursuant to Section 7 (a) (2) of the Endangered Species Act (U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Yosemite National Park obtained a list of federally designated Threatened, Endangered, Proposed and Candidate species for Tenaya Lake Area Plan from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on February 4, 2010. This list was used as the basis for analyzing the affects of this project on federally protected species. Based on this list, park data, and park staff's professional knowledge and judgment it was determined that the project would have "no affect" on any federally protected species or their critical habitat. Therefore, no further consultation is required (50 CFR 402.14).

### **State Water Resources Control Board**

As required, the NPS will file a Notice of Intent to discharge stormwater to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and prepare and implement provisions of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to control runoff from construction activities. The SWPPP will be prepared by the Contractor, and approved by NPS and the SWRCB prior to construction.

### **California State Historic Preservation Officer/Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**

In accordance with the 1999 PA, public involvement was coordinated with the NEPA Public Involvement and Scoping discussed above. Pursuant to the 1999 PA, the park has responsibility to review projects of this nature and magnitude in- house. Pursuant to Stipulation VIII of the 1999 PA, the EA facilitated notification to the SHPO and the public of the intention to implement standard mitigation measures. The SHPO was provided with a copy of the EA, and had an opportunity to review and comment on this project during the public comment period. The SHPO will also be provided with a copy of this FONSI. In accordance with the 1999 PA among Yosemite National Park, the California SHPO, and the ACHP, professional staff from Yosemite National Park have determined that implementation of the Selected Alternative will have no effect on historic properties with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures and incorporation of design features to avoid or minimize direct effects.

## **American Indian Consultation**

Yosemite National Park is consulting with American Indian tribes having cultural association with this geographical area of the park, including the Bridgeport Paiute Indian Colony, the Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Tribe, the Bishop Paiute Tribe, the American Indian Council of Mariposa County (aka Southern Sierra Miwuk), and the Tuolumne Band of Me- Wuk Indians. The park is also consulting with the North Fork Mono Rancheria Indians of California, and the Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians. Consultation was initiated at the July 22, 2008, All- Tribes meeting held in Wawona. The tribes were invited to an internal scoping field visit on October 8, 2008, and representative from the Bridgeport Paiute Colony, Southern Sierra Miwuk, and the Tuolumne Band of Me- Wuk Indians attended, providing comment and input on the project.

Consultation has continued throughout the planning process during monthly and quarterly face to face meetings, and in June 2009 correspondence was sent concerning the project status and proposed archeological investigations with an invitation to participate in the studies. American Indian representation was provided by the Tuolumne Band of Me- Wuk Indians during the archeological investigations in September and October 2009 (Simons 2010).

Associated American Indian Tribal Governments were provided with a copy of this EA during the public comment period. The North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California submitted a letter in response to the EA with concerns regarding monitoring of pollution discharges to wetland and riparian habitat, avoidance of breeding and nesting wildlife, and requested the presence of a Tribal monitor during construction activities. These concerns will be addressed by NPS through compliance with best management practices and mitigation measures, and the presence of an environmental monitor and American Indian monitor where applicable.

Consultation will continue through project development and implementation and will include providing these governments with a copy of this FONSI.

## **NON- IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES**

Pursuant to the 1916 Organic Act, the NPS has a management responsibility "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of future generations." Therefore, the NPS cannot take an action that will "impair" park resources or values.

Based on the analysis provided in the EA, the NPS concludes that implementation of the Selected Alternative will have no major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of Yosemite National Park; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of Yosemite National Park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the park's 1980 General Management Plan or other relevant NPS planning documents. Consequently, implementation of the Selected Alternative will not violate the NPS Organic Act.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on information contained in *Tenaya Lake Area Plan EA* as summarized above, the full consideration of scoping and EA review comments received from affected agencies, tribal governments, and the public, and the incorporation of the best management practices and mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, it is the determination

of the NPS that the Selected Alternative is not a major federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR, Section 1508.13), an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. The Selected Alternative as detailed in this *Tenaya Lake Area Plan Finding of No Significant Impact* may be implemented as soon as practicable.

**RECOMMENDED:**



Don L. Neubacher  
Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

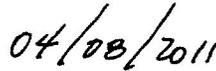


Date

**APPROVED:**



Christine S. Lehnertz  
Regional Director, Pacific West Region  
National Park Service



Date

*Finding of No Significant Impact*

*(page intentionally left blank)*

# TENAYA LAKE AREA PLAN

## ERRATA SHEETS

The following list includes clarifications or corrections to the environmental assessment (EA), including details specific to modifications of Alternative 2. None of the corrections listed below significantly affect the analyses or conclusions of the effect of implementing the selected alternative.

---

Abstract, Paragraph 2: “*Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence) (Preferred) would restore 9.7 acres to natural conditions, reduce roadside parking to five spaces on the southern side of Tioga Road, include a continuous trail along the western side of the lake, provide an accessible trail between Murphy Creek and East Beach, and replace existing culverts with a box culvert and provide a pedestrian sidewalk at the Tioga Road/Murphy Creek crossing*” has been updated to state “Modified Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence) (Preferred) would restore 9.7 acres to natural conditions, reduce roadside parking to 55 spaces on the northern and southern sides of Tioga Road, include a continuous trail along the western side of the lake, provide an accessible trail between Murphy Creek West and East Beach, and replace existing culverts with a box culvert”.

Abstract, Paragraph 4: “*Visitor parking capacity would total 215 spaces, including 195 spaces within designated lots south of Tioga Road, five designated roadside spaces south of Tioga Road between Sunrise Trailhead and Murphy Creek, and 15 undesignated spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road near East Beach*” has been updated to state: “Visitor parking capacity would total 232 spaces, including 177 spaces within designated lots south of Tioga Road 40 designated roadside spaces north and south of Tioga Road, and 15 undesignated spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road near East Beach. Roadside parking would include designated long and short- term spaces.”

Executive Summary, Page ix, Actions Common to All Action Alternatives, add to end of first bullet: “Ecological restoration may include temporary closure of designated areas.”

Executive Summary, Page x, Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence), replace “*Total parking capacity would be 215 spaces including: 195 designated spaces within parking areas, five roadside spaces on the southern side of Tioga Road between Sunrise Trailhead and Murphy Creek, and 15 undesignated roadside spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road*” with “Total parking capacity would be 232 spaces including: 177 designated spaces within parking areas, 40 designated roadside spaces north and south of Tioga Road, and 15 undesignated roadside spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road”.

Chapter 1, page 1- 9, within the Yosemite National Park Planning Context section, add the following:

### *Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan*

The NPS is in the process of preparing and conducting NEPA compliance (EIS) for the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Plan. This document will guide the future management of the river to ensure the protection and enhancement of the river’s Outstandingly Remarkable Values and its free- flowing condition. The plan will also determine more specifically the programs and activities needed to meet river protection goals in Tuolumne Meadows and throughout the river corridor. The process to create the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River

Comprehensive Management Plan and its accompanying environmental impact statement (Tuolumne River Plan/EIS) began in 2006, and a draft document for public review is anticipated for release in Summer 2011. While Tenaya Lake is located outside of the Wild and Scenic River Corridor, implementation of this plan will affect parkwide visitor experience, transportation, and resources.

New Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan

The NPS is preparing the Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (Merced River Plan/EIS) for the 81 miles of the Merced River within Yosemite National Park. When completed, the plan will guide future management of activities in the river corridor, including site- specific actions needed to protect the river in Yosemite Valley, El Portal, and Wawona. While Tenaya Lake is located outside of the Wild and Scenic River Corridor, implementation of this plan will affect parkwide visitor experience, transportation, and resources.

Chapter 1, Policy and Planning Context, page 1- 5, after bullet “Director’s Order 41: Wilderness Preservation and Management” add “Director’s Order 47: Sound Preservation and Noise Management”.

Chapter 2, page 2- 8, update Table 2- 1, as followed:

**Table 2-1. Comparison of Total Physical Parking Capacity**

<b>Parking Area</b>	<b>Alt 1 No Action*</b>	<b>Alt 2 Tenaya Confluence</b>	<b>Alt 3 Tenaya Ecotones</b>	<b>Alt 4 Lake Loop</b>	<b>Alt 5 Immersive Nodes</b>
Sunrise Trailhead and Old Campground	60 (1 ADA)	61 (3 ADA)	68 (3 ADA)	89 (4 ADA)	104 (4 ADA)
Murphy Creek	39 (0 ADA)	48 (2 ADA)	40 (2 ADA)	51 (2-3 ADA)	56 (3 ADA)
East Beach	35 (0 ADA)	68 (3 ADA)	70 (3 ADA)	59 (3 ADA)	46 (2 ADA)
Roadside Parking	277	55	30	15	45
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>411*</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>251</b>

Note: Parking estimate includes standard, accessible, recreational vehicle, and bus pull-through spaces

\*parking estimate represents physical capacity, maximum observed number of vehicles parked at one time is 251

Chapter 2, page 2- 18, Ecological Restoration, add the following bullet at the end of the list: “Ecological restoration may include temporary closure of designated areas.”

Chapter 2, page 2- 18, Ecological Restoration, add to beginning of first full paragraph: “Restoration within the East Beach area would include removal and relocation of an existing trail, repair of wetland habitat, and lakeshore restoration and revegetation.”

Chapter 2, page 2- 20, paragraph 6, Alternative 2: Tenaya Confluence (Preferred Alternative): “*This alternative removes almost all roadside parking on the southern side of Tioga Road (262 spaces), with the exception of five spaces between Sunrise Trailhead and Murphy Creek. This*

*alternative includes a total of 215 parking spaces, including expanded parking in the Sunrise Trailhead, Murphy Creek, and East Beach areas (195 designated spaces total), five roadside spaces on the southern side of Tioga Road, and retaining 15 undesignated spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road. Accessible trails would be located within the East Beach and Sunrise Trailhead areas, and between Murphy Creek and East Beach*” has been modified to state “This alternative removes almost all roadside parking on the southern side of Tioga Road (222 spaces). This alternative includes a total of 232 parking spaces, including expanded parking in the Sunrise Trailhead, Murphy Creek, and East Beach areas (177 designated spaces total), 40 designated short and long-term roadside spaces on the northern and southern sides of Tioga Road, and retaining 15 undesignated spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road. Accessible trails would be located within the East Beach, Murphy Creek, and Sunrise Trailhead areas, and between Murphy Creek and East Beach.”

Chapter 2, page 2- 21, first paragraph under Tioga Road: replace first sentence *“This alternative includes five roadside parking spaces on the southern side of Tioga road between Sunrise Trailhead and Murphy Creek”* with “This alternative includes 40 designated roadside parking spaces including: five short- term spaces on the southern side of Tioga Road at East Beach, 15 spaces between Murphy Creek and Old Campground on the southern side of Tioga Road, and 20 spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road west of Sunrise Trailhead”.

Chapter 2, page 2- 21, first paragraph under Sunrise Trailhead and Old Campground: replace first sentence *“Under Alternative 2, a total of 79 designated parking spaces would be provided in this area. The existing parking area would be re- organized and expanded to the west to provide 61 standard, three accessible, and two RV parking spaces”* with “Under Alternative 2, a total of 61 designated parking spaces would be provided in this area. The existing parking area would be re- organized and expanded to the west to provide 48 standard (including four accessible) spaces.”

Chapter 2, page 2- 22, third paragraph under Murphy Creek: replace *“The section within the Murphy Creek area would be approximately 1,774 feet, and would include a sidewalk over the proposed box culvert at the Murphy Creek crossing south of Tioga Road”* with “The section within the Murphy Creek area would be approximately 1,774 feet, and would include two spanned foot bridges over the channels of Murphy Creek and a delineated trail leading from the parking area to the lakeshore”.

Chapter 2, page 2- 23, third paragraph under East Beach: delete *“The existing, informal log crossing over Tenaya Creek would remain.”*

Chapter 2, page 2- 58, Table 2- 3, Alternative 2 Tenaya Confluence, Sunrise Trailhead Area, Parking and Transportation row: delete *“RV spaces: 2”* and update parking numbers as follows: “Standard spaces: 44 Accessible spaces: 4 Shuttle stops: 2”.

Chapter 2, page 2- 62, Table 2- 3, Alternative 2 Tenaya Confluence, Tioga Road West, Roadside Parking and Turn- outs row: update parking numbers as follows: “Standard spaces: 35”.

Chapter 2, page 2- 62, Table 2- 3, Alternative 2 Tenaya Confluence, Tioga Road East, Roadside Parking and Turn- outs row: update parking numbers as follows: “Standard spaces: 20”.

Chapter 2, page 2- 82, Table 2- 4, Alternative 2 Tenaya Confluence, Transportation row, paragraph 2: replace *“35 - 40”* with “19- 40.”

Chapter 3, page 3- 9, Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence): update “*Alternative 2 would significantly reduce roadside parking on the southern side of Tioga Road (five spaces are proposed)....Total parking capacity would be 215 spaces including: 195 designated spaces within parking areas, five spaces south of Tioga Road, and 10 to 15 undesignated spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road*” with the following: “Alternative 2 would significantly reduce roadside parking on the southern side of Tioga Road (20 spaces are proposed)....Total parking capacity would be 232 spaces including: 177 designated spaces within parking areas, 20 designated spaces south of Tioga Road between Old Campground and East Beach, 20 designated spaces north of Tioga Road west of Sunrise Trailhead, and 10 to 15 undesignated spaces on the northern side of Tioga Road between Murphy Creek and East Beach”.

Chapter 3, Hydrology Floodplains and Water Quality, Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence, Preferred Alternative), page 3- 29, paragraph 1, update “*Pedestrian bridges would include a 15- foot bridge over small creek channel*” by adding “and two foot bridges over the channels of Murphy Creek”. Delete “*No bridges or paths would be constructed within the alluvial fan, which would allow the braided channels to naturally shift*” and replace with analysis of these structures described under Alternative 4 (Lake Loop) (page 3- 32): “Two bridges and an accessible path would traverse the Murphy Creek fan, potentially interfering with the natural shift of waterways, or resulting in erosion surrounding bridge abutments” and “The intent of proposed improvements is to maintain or restore the hydrological flow of creeks and drainages associated with Tenaya Lake. While effects to water quality would be beneficial, minor adverse impacts may occur within the Murphy Creek area due to the continued use of existing culverts, potential backwater conditions during larger flood events, and the potential obstruction of hydrological flows within the Murphy fan. Proposed bridge structures would require site specific engineering to ensure that the capacity, size, and location of footings does not interfere with runoff or cause additional flooding. Adverse effects would be mitigated by engineered design and ongoing maintenance within the Murphy Creek area.”

Chapter 3, Soundscapes, Alternatives 2 (Preferred), 3, and 4, page 3- 106: add to the end of paragraph 1: “The noise level generated by rumble strips can be controlled by design, such as depth and placement of grooves. The rumble strips would be designed to generate noise less than 5 decibels above current conditions.”

Chapter 3, Visitor Experience, Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence, Preferred Alternative), page 3- 147, paragraph 3: update “*Under Alternative 2, overall parking area would be reduced from current conditions, which may limit visitor capacity at the lake. This alternative would provide a total of 215 parking spaces, which would equate to 86% of maximum, peak, observed parking under current conditions. During these peak conditions, approximately 36 vehicles may not be accommodated, and these visitors may be required to modify their planned itinerary and experience other destinations within the park, or delay a day visit to Tenaya Lake or overnight parking for Wilderness trailheads*” to state “Under Alternative 2, overall parking area would be reduced from current conditions, which may limit visitor capacity at the lake. This alternative would provide a total of 232 parking spaces, which would equate to 92% of maximum, peak, observed parking under current conditions. During these peak conditions, approximately 19 vehicles may not be accommodated, and these visitors may be required to modify their planned itinerary and experience other destinations within the park, or delay a day visit to Tenaya Lake or overnight parking for Wilderness trailheads.”

Chapter 3, Visitor Experience, Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence, Preferred Alternative), page 3- 147, paragraph 8: update “Parking along Tioga Road would be significantly reduced, and would

include 20 designated spaces south of Tioga Road, 20 designated spaces north of Tioga Road, and up to 15 undesignated roadside parking on the northern side of the road between Murphy Creek and East Beach”.

Chapter 3, Visitor Experience, Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence, Preferred Alternative), page 3-148, third full paragraph: add to the end of the cumulative impacts analysis: “Future modifications in the Tenaya Lake Area Plan that would benefit the visitor experience would be considered and possibly implemented when visitation and transportation issues to be addressed in the New Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan are known”.

Chapter 3, Transportation, Alternative 1 (No Action), page 3-159, second full paragraph: add “The New Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan and” at the beginning of the first sentence.

Chapter 3, Transportation, page 3-159, first paragraph under Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence, Preferred Alternative): update *“Under Alternative 2, construction would be focused on expanding parking at Sunrise Trailhead, Murphy Creek, and East Beach while removing most parking along Tioga Road”* to state “Under Alternative 2, construction would be focused on expanding parking at Sunrise Trailhead, Murphy Creek, and East Beach, removing parking within resource-sensitive areas along Tioga Road, and providing limited short and long-term roadside parking within non-sensitive areas”.

Chapter 3, Transportation, Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence, Preferred Alternative), page 3-160, paragraph 1: update *“Alternative 2 would provide a total of 215 parking spaces, which would equate to 86% of maximum, peak, observed parking under current conditions. During these peak conditions, approximately 36 vehicles may not be accommodated, and these visitors may circulate within the Tenaya Lake area looking for an available parking space, or they may continue on to other destinations within the park”* to state “Alternative 2 would provide a total of 232 parking spaces, which would equate to 92% of maximum, peak, observed parking under current conditions. During these peak conditions, approximately 19 vehicles may not be accommodated, and these visitors may circulate within the Tenaya Lake area looking for an available parking space, or they may continue on to other destinations within the park.”

Chapter 3, Transportation, Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence, Preferred Alternative), page 3-160, paragraph 2: replace “66” with “48.”

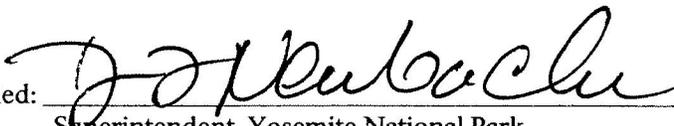
Chapter 3, Transportation, Alternative 2 (Tenaya Confluence, Preferred Alternative), page 3-160, paragraph 5: update *“Parking along Tioga Road would be limited to five spaces on the southern side of Tioga Road west of the Sunrise Trailhead area, and an area of undesignated roadside parking between Murphy Creek and East Beach on the northern side of Tioga Road”* to state “Parking along Tioga Road would include 20 designated spaces north of Tioga Road west of the Sunrise Trailhead, 15 designated spaces south of Tioga Road between Old Campground and Murphy Creek, 5 spaces south of Tioga Road near East Beach, and 15 undesignated spaces north of Tioga Road between Murphy Creek and East Beach”.

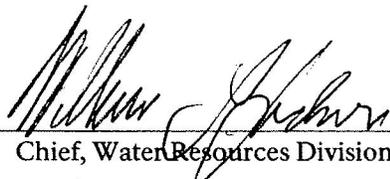
*(page intentionally left blank)*

# FLOODPLAIN STATEMENT OF FINDINGS FOR THE TENAYA LAKE AREA PLAN

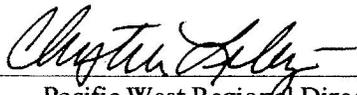
---

National Park Service  
Yosemite National Park

Recommended:  Date: 3/10/11  
Superintendent, Yosemite National Park

Concurred:  Date: 3/28/2011  
Chief, Water Resources Division

Concurred:  Date: 4/4/11  
Acting Regional Safety Officer Manager

Approved:  Date: 04/08/11  
Pacific West Regional Director

*(page intentionally left blank)*

# TENAYA LAKE AREA PLAN

## FLOODPLAIN STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

This Floodplain Statement of Findings is included in this document for public review to meet the obligations of Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) and the National Park Service Directors' Order #77- 2: Floodplain Management.

### INTRODUCTION

Tenaya Lake is a magnificent High Sierra lake surrounded by granite domes, lodgepole forests, and Yosemite's vast wilderness. It is the largest natural lake in Yosemite. Because of its remarkable scenic qualities, its inviting blue water, and its proximity to Tioga Road, Tenaya Lake is one of the most popular destinations for summer visitors in Yosemite. Yosemite National Park has developed the Tenaya Lake Area Plan, which includes conceptual designs for parking areas, trails, access improvements, visitor facilities, shuttle stops, and restoration areas. The purpose of the Tenaya Lake Area Plan is to guide management actions by the National Park Service in order to protect resources and provide opportunities for a range of quality visitor experiences at Tenaya Lake. The following goals were identified based on an assessment of the purpose and need for the project:

Improve Visitor Enjoyment and Increase Safety by:

- Providing great visitor use areas at the lake that retain the existing rustic and natural character that is so highly valued by the public;
- Providing safe, appropriate parking for visitor amenity areas;
- Clarifying to visitors where different amenities are located to decrease confusion;
- Decreasing traffic congestion along Tioga Road; and,
- Providing accessibility to day use areas for visitors with disabilities.

Provide a Framework for Restoring and Protecting Natural Systems In and Around Tenaya Lake by:

- Restoring impacted areas;
- Protecting water quality of Tenaya Lake;
- Better delineation of visitor use areas to protect plant communities and cultural resources;
- Providing well- sited bear- proof food storage lockers and appropriate garbage/recycling facilities; and,
- Preserving significant view opportunities from adjacent vistas.

Prescribe Appropriate User Capacity by:

- Evaluating existing use;
- Addressing appropriate parking needs for cars, motorcycles, RVs, tour buses and shuttle buses; and,
- Addressing needs for accessible parking spaces.

The purpose of this Floodplain Statement of Findings is to review the Tenaya Lake Area Plan in sufficient detail to:

- Provide an accurate and complete description of the flood hazard assumed by implementation of the proposed action (without mitigation)
- Provide an analysis of the comparative flood risk among alternative sites
- Describe the effects on floodplain values associated with the proposed action
- Provide a thorough description and evaluation of mitigation measures developed to achieve compliance with Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) and Directors' Order #77- 2: Floodplain Management.

## **FLOODPLAIN EXTENT**

Tenaya Lake and the surrounding project area are part of a 100- year floodplain (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA] 1990). Executive Order 11988 requires federal agencies to take action to minimize flood hazard potential and to establish flood prevention measures. The ordinary high water mark was mapped by NPS resource staff in May 2009, just following the peak lake level for the year (NPS 2009a). Based on the results of the study, the peak water level for the year occurred on May 18, 2009. Peak water levels correspond with region- wide snowpack melting, and based on the study, corresponded closely to a 2- year flood.

### **Existing Structures in the Floodplain**

The NPS Directors' Order #77- 2: Floodplain Management divides actions into the following three groups:

- Class I Actions – include administrative, residential, warehouse and maintenance buildings, and nonexempted (overnight) parking lots
- Class II Actions – include “activities for which even a slight chance of flooding would be too great.” Class II actions involve schools clinics, emergency services, fuel storage facilities, large sewage treatment plants, and structures such as museums that store irreplaceable records and artifacts.
- Class III Actions – Class I or Class II Actions that are located in high hazard areas such as those subject to flash flooding.

All of the actions proposed under the Tenaya Lake Area Plan are considered Class I actions. The regulatory floodplain for Class I actions is the 100- year floodplain.

### **The Selected Alternative (Modified Alternative 2)**

The Tenaya Lake Area Plan is designed to provide for visitor experience and opportunities while protecting resources. Trail systems located within seasonally- flooded areas will be re- rerouted and designed to minimize hydrologic interference and soil compaction. Pedestrian bridges and boardwalks are proposed to provide access across creeks, drainages, and seasonally flooded

areas, while allowing for free flow of water. Parking areas and restrooms will be located outside of the floodplain.

Proposed structures within the floodplain will be designed to reduce the potential for damage from flood events.

Under the Modified Alternative 2, actions within the floodplain will include trail development (accessible and rustic), boardwalks, picnic areas, and ecological restoration. An existing restroom within the Murphy Creek area is located within the floodplain; this restroom will be removed, and a new restroom facility will be constructed outside of seasonally flooded areas. Existing trails within the Sunrise and East Beach areas have created hydrological barriers within the floodplain; these trails will be removed and restored to facilitate natural flow of runoff and floodwaters.

## **GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FLOODING IN THE AREA**

Tenaya Lake is located within the Merced River Basin, which is part of the San Joaquin River Hydrologic Area. The basin's headwaters begin in the high elevations of the Sierra Nevada Range and join several tributaries as they drain westward through the Yosemite and Central Valleys before joining the San Joaquin River. The main tributary is the Merced River, and several smaller streams, lakes, and ponds are present throughout the basin. In regions above 5,000 feet, precipitation generally falls as snow between the months of November and April. Peak stream flows, as a result of snowmelt, occur in May and June. Minimum river flow is observed in September and October. The basin is divided into three hydrologic segments, the upper Merced River, Yosemite Valley, and the Merced River gorge. The project area is located in the Upper Merced River Watershed, which encompasses approximately 114,840 acres above Happy Isles in Upper Yosemite Valley (NPS 2004).

Floods on the Merced River are of two general types: those that occur during the late fall and winter (November through March) primarily as the result of intense rainfall, and those that occur during the spring and early summer resulting from snowmelt. At the beginning of the wet season the ground is extremely dry, and about 3 to 5 inches of precipitation is required to satisfy the retention storage capacity of the soil before any significant runoff occurs. Later in the season, when the ground may be very wet and there may be a moderate snow cover at the higher elevations, heavy rainfall over the basin causes large flood runoff. An intense storm with a high freezing level may result in flood runoff from almost the entire basin, with as much as 2 inches of snowmelt augmenting the rainfall. Most of the runoff from the Merced River basin occurs from November through July.

Across the entire site, no evidence was found to indicate that increased stormwater flows resulting from unnatural impervious surfaces such as roadways and parking areas are creating a significant hydrologic burden on Murphy Creek, Tenaya Creek, or Tenaya Lake (Sherwood 2010). Hydrologic conditions due to snowmelt and runoff within each key area are discussed below. The tributary watershed on the north side of the lake is comprised largely of steep, barren rock face, which overwhelms any stormwater runoff contribution from paved surfaces.

Natural hydrologic flow patterns are interrupted in certain places by elevated roadway, parking, and pathway surfaces. A network of culverts exists to convey flows across those physical flow barriers; there is some visual evidence that certain culverts do not have adequate hydraulic

capacity to convey design flows, and concentrated discharges from culvert outlets create erosive forces during storm events.

**Tioga Road.** Site drainage flows southerly from pockets of mountainside tributary areas along the full length of Tioga Road. Stormwater flow is constricted at culvert inlets on the north side of Tioga Road, which serve as control points and discharge concentrated flows on the south side of Tioga Road. West Tioga Road forms a causeway between Sunrise and Murphy Creek, capable of storing large volumes of backwater north of the roadway during heavy storm events, and culverts along this stretch discharge to informal drainage ways in naturalized areas that slope down to the lake. East Tioga Road interrupts sheetflow cascading down Polly Dome, and stormwater is captured in a shallow, informal ditch at the base of the dome and is then conveyed across Tioga Road by periodic culverts that discharge into the rip- rap embankment between the road and the lake. It is currently unknown whether culverts along Tioga Road have adequate capacity to convey flows from the design storm. Concentrated outflows from the culverts are a source of minor, periodic erosion in the informal drainage ways conveying stormwater into Tenaya Lake.

**Sunrise and Old Campground.** Site drainage flows southeasterly from a relatively small mountainside tributary area of ten acres through a series of culverts across Tioga Road, across the site, and into Tenaya Lake or its outlet creek. Stormwater flow is constricted at culvert inlets on the north side of Tioga Road, which serve as control points and discharge concentrated flows on the south side of Tioga Road. Those concentrated outflows are a source of minor, periodic erosion in the informal drainage ways conveying stormwater into Tenaya Lake. The outlet creek of Tenaya Lake flows southwesterly along the southeast edge of the Sunrise site. Flow in this creek is not inhibited by any constructed features, and the water course is in a natural, healthy state.

**Murphy Creek.** Site drainage flows southerly across the lake. Murphy Creek facilitates upper elevation stormwater and snowmelt flow towards Tenaya Lake. The Murphy Creek area is a braided alluvial fan centered around the main channel of Murphy Creek, which is conveyed under Tioga Road by a series of four culverts before traversing the fan and discharging into Tenaya Lake. The culverts provide control points for the main channel, stabilizing the flow course and restricting its ability to shift during high flow events. Preliminary analysis indicates, however, that the hydraulic capacity of those four culverts is only adequate to convey stormwater and snowmelt flows equal to the two- year storm without creating backwater conditions. It should be stressed at this time that the hydraulic capacity analysis of the Murphy Creek culverts is cursory and needs to be further informed by specific engineering details and a more in- depth analysis incorporating backwater effects. For very large storms, it appears possible that backwater could overtop Tioga Road, threatening to wash out that section of the causeway, as happened in recent years, and unleash severe erosive potential onto broader areas of Murphy's fan.

Several auxiliary culverts relay stormwater flows across Tioga Road at the east and west ends of the fan, and those culverts may provide supplemental hydraulic capacity for the main channel during severe backwater conditions. Concentrated flows discharging from the auxiliary culverts into informal drainage channels are a source of minor, periodic erosion into Tenaya Lake.

**East Beach.** Site drainage flows southerly from almost 100 acres of Polly Dome through a series of five culverts across Tioga Road, where it is intercepted by a system of wetlands and the Tenaya Lake inlet creek which flow westerly into Tenaya Lake. Stormwater flow is constricted at culvert

inlets on the north side of Tioga Road, which serve as control points for the concentrated flows discharging on the south side of Tioga Road. Those concentrated outflows are a source of minor, periodic erosion at the culvert outlets.

The inlet creek of Tenaya Lake flows southwesterly along the southeast edge of the East Beach site. The main creek channel was not historically mapped in its current location, and the succession of upgradient floodplain from meadow to pine forest both indicate that the current channel may have been excavated in the early to mid 1900's in order to expedite drainage from the upgradient wetland system. Creek flow is uninhibited by any constructed features, and the channel appears stable and in a healthy state (Sherwood 2010).

**South Trail.** Site drainage flows northwesterly from hundreds of acres of mountainside area southeast of the lake, across South Trail through a series of periodic culverts, and then discharges onto the southeast banks of Tenaya Lake. Stormwater flow is constricted at culvert inlets on the south side of South Trail, and backwater conditions lead to frequent overtopping and significant erosion of the pathway around those culverts. Concentrated flows discharging onto the southern banks of the lake are a source of minor, periodic erosion at the culvert outlets. There are no jurisdictional or notable creeks along the South Trail.

## **JUSTIFICATION FOR USE OF THE FLOODPLAIN**

Tenaya Lake is a popular visitor use area within Yosemite National Park. The lake itself provides a stunning visual setting and opportunities for a variety of visitor opportunities. The intent of the plan is to redevelop existing opportunities, including trail systems, to address safety issues and protect cultural and natural resources. Proposed uses within the floodplain will be limited to trail development (accessible and rustic), boardwalks, picnic areas, and ecological restoration

Proposed bridge structures and boardwalks will be designed to minimize the potential for damage to these facilities from flood events. Proposed drainage facilities and infrastructure will include installation of new culverts as a part of parking area, trail, and roadside improvements. Strategies such as using vegetation and strategic boulder cluster placement to dissipate hydrologic energy will be employed to improve existing culvert performance where erosion patterns and other related issues occur. Culvert outlets will be retrofitted with energy dissipation strategies that will disperse concentrated flows and mitigate erosion at those points.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE- SPECIFIC FLOOD RISK**

Areas surrounding Tenaya Lake are seasonally flooded following snowmelt. Runoff flows into Tenaya Lake at the inlet at East Beach, Murphy Creek, and smaller unnamed drainages. Visitors are exposed to high water conditions, which results in obstacles to trail access. No permanent facilities will be located within the floodplain.

Ordinary high water mark was estimated by NPS by using the peak lake level derived from a water level datalogger installed at the lake and intersecting this elevation with the LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data. The peak Tenaya Lake water level for the year occurred on May 18th, the same date as the annual peak flow at the USGS Happy Isles Gage on the Merced River in Yosemite Valley. The peak flow at Happy Isles corresponded very closely to a 2- year flood peak. Peak flow at Happy Isles for water year 2009 was 2,710 cubic feet per second (cfs) at 14:15 Pacific Daylight Time (PDT) on May 18th. The 2- year flood for this site is 2,688 cfs (95% confidence

limits - 2,463 to 2,930 cfs) for the period of record (1916- 2009) as calculated by fitting annual peak flows to a log- Pearson III distribution (Haan, 2002, ACOE 2008). The peak flow for the Merced River at Happy Isles in 2009 approximated the 2- year flood. Because the peak lake level occurred the same day as that at Happy Isles and both peaks were driven by region- wide snowpack melting, it is expected that the high water level observed on May 18th, 2009 at Tenaya Lake corresponded closely to a 2- year peak as well.

## **DESIGN OR MODIFICATIONS TO MINIMIZE HARM TO FLOODPLAIN VALUES OR RISKS TO LIFE AND PROPERTY**

### **General Mitigation**

The design of all new structures will incorporate methods for minimizing flood damage, as contained in the National Flood Insurance Program “Floodplain Management Criteria for Flood- Prone Areas” (CFR 44, 60.3) and in accordance with any local, county, or state requirements for flood- prone areas. In particular, the proposed bridge structures will be designed to minimize the potential for flood damage.

Impacts on Tenaya Lake area’s natural and cultural resources will be minimized and mitigated.

### ***Conclusion***

The Selected Alternative will not include permanent structures within the floodplain. Raised boardwalks, accessible and rustic trails, and ecological restoration will not interfere with seasonal flood events. The removal of an existing raised and paved trail will facilitate historical hydrological flow in Sunrise area, and Tenaya Lake outlet.

The National Park Service concludes that the Selected Alternative will not create a potentially hazardous condition associated with flooding at Tenaya Lake. Mitigation and compliance with regulations and policies to prevent impacts to water quality, floodplain values, and loss of property or human life will be strictly adhered to during and after the construction. Individual permits with other federal and cooperating state and local agencies will be obtained prior to construction activities. No long- term adverse impacts will occur from the proposed actions. Therefore, the National Park Service finds the Selected Alternative to be acceptable under Executive Order 11988 for the protection of floodplains.

# TENAYA LAKE AREA PLAN

## PUBLIC COMMENT AND RESPONSE REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes public comments submitted on the *Tenaya Lake Area Plan Environmental Assessment* (Tenaya Lake Area Plan EA). The Tenaya Lake Area Plan EA was released for public review on October 12, 2010, and the National Park Service (NPS) accepted comments through November 17, 2010. Public comments were received by email, fax, and U.S. mail, and online through the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website. During the comment period, 15 public comment letters were received with a total of 35 unique concerns. This report provides a summary of public concerns expressed in those comment letters as well as responses to substantive comments.

### PUBLIC COMMENT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

Public comment letters received during the comment period were reviewed and analyzed in a series of stages which required review and assessment by staff. Each letter was read to determine discrete points expressed by the author, each of which is considered to be a comment. Each discrete comment was “coded” in order to associate that comment with a particular resource topic, or element of the plan (such as cultural resources or the plan’s relationship to other projects).

After all individual comments were coded and those of similar context were grouped together, a unique concern statement was developed to represent comments. The concern statements were framed to express public requests for action to be taken by the NPS. The concern statements were then screened to determine whether or not further clarification is needed, or whether modification of the proposed action is necessary. In the latter case, concerns were brought to park management for further deliberation.

Lastly, the planning team prepared responses to concern statements that are considered substantive. Substantive comments are those that:

- question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information in the EA;
- question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of environmental analysis;
- develop and evaluate reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the EA;
- cause changes to the proposal or alternatives; and,
- suggest factual corrections.

All comments received during the public comment period were considered and are now part of the administrative record. Comment letters can be viewed on the park’s web site at <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/tenaya.htm>.

## **USING THIS REPORT**

This report presents public concerns arranged by topic, along with a representative sample of supporting quotes. The following list of acronyms has been developed to assist the reader in reviewing the report.

### **List of Acronyms**

EA	Environmental Assessment
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GMP	General Management Plan
MRP	Merced River Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPS	National Park Service
TRP	Tuolumne River Plan

## COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

### Relationship to Other Planning Efforts

**Concern 1: NPS should include Director's Order 47 Sound Preservation and Noise Management on page 1- 5 of the EA.**

*"At page 1- 5 is a listing of applicable NPS Director's Orders. Missing is Director's Order 47 (NPS 2000) Sound Preservation and Noise Management (mentioned at p. 3- 101)."*  
(Recreation Organization; Correspondence #15)

**Response:** Directors' Order 47 has been added to the list on page 1- 3, *NPS Policy and other Relevant Guidance*.

**Concern 2: NPS should incorporate the Tenaya Lake Area Plan into the Tuolumne Meadows planning process.**

*"Because access to Tenaya Lake is part of the much larger problem of access to the entire Tuolumne Meadows area, the Tenaya Lake Area planning should be put on hold and incorporated into the larger Tuolumne Meadows planning process."*  
(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #6)

**Response:** The Tenaya Lake Area Plan project boundary is not within the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River corridor; therefore, proposed actions for management of Tenaya Lake will not be included in the Tuolumne River Plan. As future comprehensive management plans develop that influence the Tenaya Lake area, the proposed actions recommended in such plans will be integrated with those developed in the Tenaya Lake Plan.

### Implementation Funding

**Concern 3: NPS should ensure funding for the whole project to ensure implementation.**

*"My biggest concern is the feasibility of a plan where "It is anticipated that the implementation would occur over the next 15- 20 years, depending on availability of funding." Although each phase of a plan could be divided into sub- phases, with this span of time and possible funding issues, the chances of an Alternative coming to full implementation is questionable. Plans of this duration need leadership that is consistent and a sure source of funding."*  
(Individual; Correspondence #7)

**Response:** The action alternatives analyzed in the Tenaya Lake Area Plan EA were produced with input from NPS staff and public stakeholders, with much scrutiny placed on the operational impacts, and whether or not proposed actions were reasonable, and fiscally feasible. If the FONSI is approved, the NPS will implement the initial phase of the project this summer (East Beach Restoration), and is confident that over time, future funding will be appropriated for the remaining phases.

## Proposed Alternatives

### Concern 4: NPS should provide a clear title for Alternatives.

*“The names attached to the alternatives are meaningless in the context they are used: "confluence," "ecotones," "loop," "immersive." The reader strains to discern the hidden meaning or policy direction in each of these.”*

(Recreation Organization; Correspondence #15)

**Response:** The titles for the alternatives identify general themes that emerged from planning team discussions regarding various management approaches to the visitor experience and resource management at Tenaya Lake. The NPS concedes that these names were not as useful for the purposes of the environmental assessment.

- Tenaya Confluence refers to the confluence of major waterways, trails, and visitor use experiences at Tenaya Lake, and the proposed actions in Alternative 2 that coincide with wetland protection, using boardwalks and bridges over waterways to avoid wetland impacts.
- Tenaya Ecotones is used to describe a strategy for managing the different day- use areas at Tenaya Lake, for example, informal discovery at Sunrise Trailhead, and accessible connectivity between East Beach and Murphy Creek. The locations surrounding the lake such as: Sunrise trailhead; Murphy Creek day use area and trailhead; and, East Beach day use area, would be managed to possess a different character, while using similar design features, such as minimal trail development and rustic stream crossings.
- Lake Loop refers to a management theme for Tenaya Lake which focuses on dispersed lakewide visitor activity, and improved lakewide pedestrian activity.
- Immersive Nodes suggests a management strategy that identifies unique individual Tenaya Lake locations with limited non- accessible lakewide pedestrian connectivity, and overnight camping.

### Concern 5: NPS should consider combining the elements of Alternative 2 and 4.

*“For the East Beach Area, a combination of Alternatives 2 and 4 seems obvious. The two alternatives are so similar that I feel confident in the park planners adopting the specific elements of each that would be best. Whether a bridge over Tenaya Creek and constructed steps would cause undue disturbance requires a level of expertise in specifics (soils, for example) that are beyond my knowledge. There are certain differences between Alternatives 2 and 4, that frankly, do not make sense. Why are there four bear boxes in Alternative 2 and none in Alternative 4? Also, there's no reason why the Tioga Road West trail should not be accessible.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #11)

*“...at East Beach, the access to the beach should follow the design in Alternative 4, with a trail parallel to the road from the parking area to the beach. The Communal Picnic Node in Alternative 4 should be moved to the north, across the former stream channel. This way, the crowded, social, noisy, environment of convenience- seeking visitors would be spread along the northern part of the beach and continue to be separated from those seeking a quiet, more*

*private experience at the southern end. Another way to emphasize the difference in experiences would be to provide no tables on the southern side of the beach, because the tables invite a more socially- focused experience, where people eat and engage in face- to- face conversation. A third way would be to preserve the log crossing over the inlet creek, as proposed in Alternatives 2, 3, and 5, rather than build a bridge, as proposed in Alternative 4. In sum, to preserve a range of visitor experiences for beach- goers, we strongly urge you to implement the beach access proposal in Alternative 4 but with the central picnic area moved north, no tables on the south side, and no bridge.”*

(Recreation Organization; Correspondence #15)

**Response:** NPS project coordinators, resource specialists, and management reviewed the public comments related to this concern, and developed a modified preferred alternative to best address public concerns and protect park resources. The modified preferred alternative does not include a formal crossing at the Tenaya Creek inlet, and picnic tables are located to the north of the creek.

**Concern 6: NPS should consider re- opening the Murphy Creek access road/boat launch.**

*“In the past boaters were able to launch there craft at the Murphy Creek, Western area where the road actually goes to the water’s edge (not shown on Figure 2.5). This access road has been blocked in recent years with 2 large boulders. The plan should discuss the reopening of this access road in one of the alternatives...Boaters need to have direct access to the waters edge via an unobstructed path. The Murphy Creek area is the logical place to have this access since this parking area is the closest to the lakeshore.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #1)

**Response:** During alternatives development and environmental analysis, NPS assessed the condition of Murphy Creek access road and boat launch, and determined that restoration of this general area is necessary to protect and preserve sensitive and hydrological resources. The NPS will provide access to the lake for boaters so that they are able to launch their crafts at Sunrise Trailhead/Old Campground, Murphy Creek west, and East Beach, using trails that lead to the water's edge. In addition, the modified preferred alternative includes lake access for pedestrians carrying small watercraft via a delineated trail at Murphy Creek west, connecting the parking area to the beach.

**Concern 7: NPS should consider bicycle facilities at Tenaya Lake.**

*“The Tioga Road is a very popular cross Sierra bike route and as such similar facilities should be provided within the Tenaya Lake area. At the very least you folks should be encouraging arrivals via bikes and provide facilities for them - i.e. "Share- the- Road" signs, bike parking racks and an expanded (not contracted) trails network that accommodates wheel chairs and bicycles. Adding such facilites would encourage more people to arrive by bikes (perhaps from Tuolumne Meadows or the June Lakes area)instead of by automobiles and/or experience the lake itself via bicylces.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #5)

**Response:** The Tenaya Lake Area Plan interdisciplinary planning team considered all recreational options for enhancement of the visitor experience at Tenaya Lake. Given the narrow road corridor, sensitive natural and cultural resource constraints, and potential visitor use conflicts, multi- use trails for bicycles and wheelchairs were not included in the alternatives. The alternatives are silent on the use of bike parking racks but that does not preclude them from being

installed at Tenaya Lake. Also, the NPS believes that once roadside parking and congestion are addressed at Tenaya Lake, cycling in this area will be a safer and more pleasant experience.

**Concern 8: NPS should consider shuttle stops at the Murphy Creek trailhead.**

*“Locating the shuttle stop at the Murphy Creek trailhead is more logical than at the west Murphy Creek parking lot, as prescribed in Alternatives 2, 3, and 5. Backpackers and day hikers are among the primary users of the shuttle system so having the shuttle stop at the trailhead makes sense, dispersing the backpackers and day hikers from those using the facilities at the western parking lot.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #11)

**Response:** Given site limitations at Murphy Creek, sensitive resource constraints, and the need to provide safe pedestrian access at Tenaya Lake, the shuttle bus stop locations were positioned as noted in the EA.

**Concern 9: NPS should not consider camping at Tenaya Lake.**

*“Restoring camping at its former location near the lake's outlet or as proposed in Alternative five north of Tioga road at Sunrise would exacerbate resource impacts, already difficult parking issues, and expand a visitor activity where none now exists.”*

(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #8)

*“We do Not Support the Camping Proposal in Alternative 5. We have consistently supported efforts to provide more camping opportunities in the park, including more primitive camping in tightly configured walk- in sites that can fit in the space between roadways and the wilderness boundary. We therefore very much appreciate the park considering this type of facility in the Tenaya EA, and we consider this as a statement by the park that such sites can and will be considered in other locations in the park and in other planning efforts. We do not support the camping proposal in Alternative 5, however, because it is too close to the highway to provide a quality camping experience. We strongly urge the park to consider providing this type of camping facility along the segments of the Old Tioga Road leading to May Lake and Yosemite Creek, where traffic noise would be much less of a problem.”*

(Recreation Organization; Correspondence #15)

**Response:** The Tenaya Lake Plan EA action alternatives were derived in consultation with park staff, Tribes, government agencies, and public comments. In response to public comments urging the park to provide camping opportunities at Tenaya Lake, the addition of 10 primitive campsites was added in Alternative 5. The NPS is mandated to consider public concerns in the development of a reasonable range of alternatives. After full consideration and review of environmental impacts associated with camping at Tenaya Lake, the NPS decided that camping would not be included in the Preferred Alternative.

**Concern 10: NPS should consider use of decomposed granite instead of asphalt.**

*“When it comes to parking areas, I feel that the use of asphaltic paving should be limited and materials such as decomposed granite should be considered. While maintenance of asphaltic paving would be easier and less costly, in such a natural area alternative surfaces would be more appealing to the eye and less ecologically damaging.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #7)

**Response:** The NPS agrees and will consider asphalt paving as well as alternative parking surfaces that reduce impacts to water quality, and have the least impact on natural and socio- cultural resources.

**Concern 11: The NPS should consider a better location for campsites.**

*“Restoring camping at Tenaya Lake is a good idea, but the campground in Alternative 5 seems out of place. It appears it would be tent spaces next to a parking lot. A campground at Tenaya Lake needs more thought concerning location and layout.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #11)

**Response:** As summarized in the EA (refer to page 2- 56), the environment at Tenaya Lake south of Tioga Road poses major constraints for the siting and operation of campsites. Resources include water quality, seasonal flooding, special- status plant species, cultural resources, American Indian practices, and jurisdictional wetland habitat. The location identified in Alternative 4 was selected because it would avoid or minimize effects to these resources.

**Concern 12: The NPS should retain the Murphy Creek east picnic area.**

*“Murphy Creek: Alternative 4 is the only one to maintain the Murphy Creek east picnic area. My family and I have been using this area for over 30 years. Except for the parking area deterioration, it has remained largely unchanged; human use of the picnic tables and fire grills has not significantly altered the area. With the proposed new east parking area, the erosion destruction caused by cars would no longer occur. Please maintain the picnic areas on both sides of Murphy Creek as proposed in Alternative 4 so other generations can bring their children to experience this special place while enjoying a picnic.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #11)

**Response:** Due to hydrologic conditions and the presence of wetland habitat, NPS identified the Murphy Creek east area as an optimal candidate for ecological restoration. As shown on Figure 2- 12 (refer to page 2- 26 of the EA), two picnic areas are proposed under the Preferred Alternative, including an area near the lakeshore. NPS anticipates that the changes to both the natural environment and the visitor experience will be beneficial. Although the facilities will be removed and restored to natural conditions, the Murphy Creek east area will still be available to visitors via a wheelchair accessible path.

## Alternatives

**Concern 13: NPS should not consider Alternatives 1 and 5.**

*“After reading the plan, I have come to the conclusion that Alternatives 1 and 5 should not be considered.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #7)

**Response:** Upon careful consideration of the Action Alternatives, NPS decided to adopt Alternative 2.

**Concern 14: All Alternatives have pros and cons; cannot support one specific Alternative.**

*“...unless the above matters [removal of roadside turnouts, noise generated by rumble strips, and implementation funding] are fully addressed, then none of the Alternatives should be implemented.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #7)

**Response:** Responses to these issues are addressed under Concerns 33, 25, and 8.

**Concern 15: NPS should consider Alternative 4.**

*“When it comes to a particular alternative that both maintains the Tenaya Lake experience I’ve known for 32 years and preserves this uniquely beautiful area for future generations, Alternative 4 is definitely the superior proposal...It is not too late to both maintain the magical visitor experience enjoyed by generations and preserve one of the most beautiful and unique places not only in the Sierra, but the world. If you adopt Alternative 4, you will succeed in fulfilling this mission.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #11)

**Response:** The NPS is mandated to consider public concerns in the development of a reasonable range of alternatives, and selection of the Preferred Alternative. After full consideration and review of environmental impacts associated with each alternative, the NPS decided that a modified Preferred Alternative would meet project goals and objectives, and would result in the least environmental effect.

## **Parking and Capacity**

**Concern 16: NPS should provide viable alternatives to reduce parking while decreasing congestion consistent with the 1980 General Management Plan.**

*“To reduce parking at Tenaya Lake without viable alternatives in place would be an extension of the same failed policies NPS has followed in Yosemite Valley. These policies have resulted in increased congestion, in direct violation of the 1980 General Management Plan.”*

(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #6)

**Response:** NPS recognizes that increased visitor demand for access to public parks and destinations such as Tenaya Lake have resulted in congestion during peak seasonal periods. NPS considers this to be a park-wide issue, to be more appropriately addressed in transportation and regional plans. During development of the alternatives and preparation of the EA, NPS carefully considered options for reducing parking and decreasing congestion within the Tenaya Lake area. The Tenaya Lake Area Plan includes accommodations to address congestion, such as improved parking areas, bus parking and safe ingress and egress, and shuttle stops, which can be integrated into other park-wide transportation plans as they are developed.

**Concern 17: NPS should address transportation and visitor capacity issues in the Merced River Plan and Yosemite Valley before the Tenaya Lake Area Plan.**

*“...the Tioga Road has some complicating problems with day use, ie its a through highway, and there are serious operational issues to be addressed. I could go into great detail of the*

*history of much of this including the 1980 GMP to restore the walk in campsites at Tenaya, the lack of monies to develop the trailhead parking at Sunrise, Cathedral, etc as well as the impact of improving the Tioga Road and the resulting dramatic increase of visitation on said. Realizing this is a complicated issue, I think the park should concentrate on the Merced River Plan and the issue of visitor capacity in Yosemite Valley before taking on the issues of the Tioga Road and the sometimes congested areas of Tenaya Lake and the Tuolumne Meadows.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #9)

*“Without court mandated plans on WSRA and the MRP in place, site planning and appropriate actions in other areas of the Park, especially those related to vehicles and transportation become more uncertain and obscure. Accordingly, language in the final EA revision would be appropriate to indicate future modifications in the Plan that might further reduce impacts would be considered and possibly implemented when visitation and transportation issues confronting WSRA and MRP in the Valley are known.”*

(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #8)

**Response:** The goals and objectives of the Tenaya Lake Area Plan (Tenaya Lake Plan) include improvement of the visitor experience and visitor safety by providing safe, appropriate parking for visitor use areas. The plan proposes to decrease traffic congestion, and to address appropriate parking needs for cars, motorcycles, RVs, tour buses and shuttle buses. The Tenaya Lake Plan EA evaluates existing visitor use, and examines ways to delineate visitor use areas to protect plant communities and cultural resources. The Tenaya Lake Plan/EA and the Tuolumne Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan/EIS (Tuolumne River Plan) have similar visitor use, resource impacts, and traffic problems. By working on the Tenaya Lake Plan concurrently with the Tuolumne River Plan, the NPS can benefit from data that has been acquired for Tuolumne River Plan. However, the scope of the Tenaya Lake Plan does not include park- wide transportation planning. The NPS recognizes the interconnectedness between visitor use/transportation issues at Tenaya Lake and visitor use/transportation issues parkwide. Therefore, as future comprehensive management, and park- wide transportation plans develop, proposed actions recommended in such plans will be integrated with those developed in the Tenaya Lake Plan.

**Concern 18: NPS should address parkwide visitor capacity issues before removing parking, turnouts, and campsites.**

*“Over the last 50 plus years I have observed a steady decrease in both parking and camping sites in the Yosemite Valley, Tenaya Lake and Tuolumne Meadows area (park wide for that matter). It appears to me that we continue to remove pullouts, strip parking and parking areas, generally speaking, and react to those peak visitation days with a "just keep them moving" operational approach...I feel strongly that until the issues of visitor capacity are addressed, we are only going to further discombobulate the situation by more elimination of parking and campsites.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #9)

**Response:** The NPS recognizes the increased demand for park opportunities, and the resulting effects on the resources that make Tenaya Lake a key destination. The goals and objectives of the Tenaya Lake include improvement of the visitor experience and visitor safety by providing safe, appropriate parking for visitor use areas. The plan proposes to decrease traffic congestion, and to address appropriate parking needs for cars, motorcycles, RVs, tour buses and shuttle buses. As

future comprehensive management, and park-wide transportation plans develop, proposed actions recommended in such plans will be integrated with those developed in the Tenaya Lake Plan.

**Concern 19: The principle objective of the Tenaya Lake Area Plan should be to address roadside parking to better preserve resources and substantially reduce vehicle clutter.**

*“By far the most problematic issue is the unregulated parking along the Tioga road, especially where it impacts sensitive resources and high value view shed areas...Restoring view shed quality, protecting sensitive resources and providing a quality visitor experience with substantially reduced vehicle clutter should be the Plan's principle objective. Parking capacity should be determined by resource and view shed considerations and not by anticipated maximum demand during high use periods. This conditions based objective cannot be achieved without a reasonable but significant reduction in the number of vehicles currently occupying the Tenaya Lake area.”*

(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #8)

**Response:** The project objectives include but are not limited to protection and restoration of resources and increasing visitor safety (refer to page 1- 2 of the EA). Goals of the project include but are not limited to providing a framework for restoring and protecting natural systems and cultural resources, providing safe and appropriate parking, decreasing traffic congestion along Tioga Road, and addressing appropriate parking needs. The parking areas proposed under Alternative 2 were sited to avoid or minimize adverse effects to sensitive resources and the visual quality, while providing adequate capacity for most visitors. As demonstrated in Table 2- 1 (refer to page 2- 8 of the EA), Alternative 2 proposes a 14 percent reduction in maximum parking (based on observed peak quantity). NPS considers this to be a reasonable and significant reduction in the number of vehicles.

**Concern 20: NPS should consider maintaining current parking capacity.**

*“(1) NPS should not reduce parking capacity below current levels unless and until they have put in place an acceptable system which would enable visitors to access the Tenaya Lake area without using their cars. (2) In the meantime, to replace parking on the road shoulders, NPS should create small dispersed parking spaces among the lodgepole pines, such as on the north side of the road in the Murphy Creek area. We do not have a problem with the proposal for limited expansion of the formal parking at the Sunrise trail head, but if roadside parking is to be eliminated, then additional parking in designated lots would be needed just to maintain the current capacity.”*

(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #6)

**Response:** Under current conditions, approximately 50,086 square feet of dirt and paved shoulders on and adjacent to Tioga Road provide space for approximately 277 standard vehicles. Over time, uncontrolled parking has resulted in both designated and undesignated areas with a total capacity of 411 vehicles. The maximum observed number of vehicles at Tenaya Lake is 251. NPS considered this option in Alternative 5. Provision of 251 spaces would provide available parking during maximum, peak periods; however, based on visitor use and parking data obtained by NPS for the EA, this level of capacity would not be necessary outside of maximum peak periods. As noted in the response to Concern 13, NPS considered public comments and modified the preferred alternative by including additional roadside parking in areas where sensitive

resources would not be compromised. The modified preferred alternative provides a total parking capacity of 232 spaces (92% of maximum vehicles observed).

**Concern 21: The NPS should reduce or relocate roadside parking without adverse effects to visitors.**

*“Developing acceptable alternatives to reduce or relocate parking in these roadside areas without serious adverse impacts to visitors remains the most important element of the Plan.”*  
(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #8)

**Response:** The NPS considered a range of alternatives that would provide varying levels of parking capacity. NPS recognizes that removal of roadside parking would affect return- visitor expectations and some uses of the area. As discussed in the Visitor Experience and Transportation sections of the EA, the reduction in parking and proposed parking design would result in beneficial effects to the visitor experience by clearing directing visitors to designated parking lots, improving public safety, and reducing vehicular clutter adjacent to the lake. The EA notes that during peak periods, some visitors would not locate a parking spot, which would result in an adverse effect to those individuals (refer to 3- 160 of the EA); however, the alternatives include other methods of transportation, such as bus parking and shuttle stops, which can be incorporated into park- wide transportation and visitor capacity plans. The modified preferred alternative includes additional parking adjacent to the roadway, and informal turnouts, to address public concerns regarding visitor experience.

**Concern 22: NPS should consider expanded shuttle service to provide visitor access while reducing vehicles and providing a range of visitor experiences.**

*“An expanded scheduled shuttle service from Tuolumne, other east side venues, and Yosemite Valley would increase visitor access without increasing vehicle and parking problems at Tenaya. This action could be a major factor in reducing vehicle impacts and numbers and could be expanded once fundamental court mandated River Plans in Tuolumne and the Valley are in finalized.”*  
(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #8)

*“Expanded backcountry parking in Tuolumne Meadows with shuttle service to trail heads in the Tenaya Lake area (to be discussed more fully as part of the Tuolumne River Plan) would be helpful. Expanded parking in the May Lake area with shuttle service to Tenaya Lake would work as well.”*  
(Individual; Correspondence #3)

*“A preferred alternative the Committee would support might be to increase walk- in campsites at Tuolumne and provide scheduled shuttle service for day use at Tenaya. This may be a practical way to provide additional walk- in camping opportunities in Yosemite and avoid exacerbating resource issues and an almost impossible day use parking/pullout problem at Tenaya.”*  
(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #8)

**Response:** The goals and objectives of the Tenaya Lake include improvement of the visitor experience and visitor safety by providing safe, appropriate parking for visitor use areas. The plan proposes to decrease traffic congestion, and to address appropriate parking needs for cars, motorcycles, RVs, tour buses and shuttle buses. However, the scope of the Tenaya Lake Plan does

not include park- wide transportation planning, such as parkwide shuttle planning, or amenities in other locations, such as campsites outside of the plan boundary. As future comprehensive management, park- wide transportation plans, and other visitor amenities develop, proposed actions recommended in such plans will be integrated with those developed in the Tenaya Lake Plan.

**Concern 23: NPS should consider paving all roadside parking and installing left turn lanes to protect resources and improve safety.**

*“...as part of the Tioga Road Rehabilitation Project, NPS needs to identify all areas appropriate for roadside parking, and pave them. This will help limit the impacts of roadside parking and help prevent unwanted automobile fluids leaching into the soil. The policy of NPS should be "parking on pavement only" throughout the Tioga Road corridor and ultimately, the Park...I would encourage you to explore putting in left turn lanes as part of Tenaya Lake Alternative Two or the Tioga Road Rehabilitation project.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #3)

**Response:** The preferred alternative will decrease the impacts of roadside parking by providing clear barriers and boundaries to prohibit unregulated parking. The NPS does not intend to pave every parking area at Tenaya Lake. A combination of asphalt, alternative impervious surfaces, and unpaved surfaces will be used. Each of these parking surface types will include biofiltration to treat polluted stormwater runoff before it enters the lake and creeks. The NPS does not intend to install left turn lanes at Tenaya Lake. NPS will work with a traffic engineer during implementation of road and parking area improvements to better facilitate safer ingress and egress, as described in the Tenaya Lake Area Plan.

**Concern 24: NPS should consider alternative parking design to address backcountry, day use, and short- term uses.**

*“...if the parking areas at Tenaya Lake are taken up by backcountry travelers who occupy the lots for days at a time, visitors who are just passing through and would like to stop for a picnic, a short walk or just to take a photo will have few options. They will either keep going, or park in a less desirable area, thus impacting the resource further. Therefore, I recommend that the parking area slated for improvement under Alternate 2 be designated as "Day Use Only" (especially during the busy summer months). This is the only way to provide opportunities for the vast number of visitors who are only there for a short time to enjoy this beautiful area...parking for backcountry travelers is needed in the Tenaya Lake area. Alternate 4 identifies an area across the Tioga Road from the Sunrise parking area as a potential site for a limited number of campsites. This area would make a lousy campground, but could make a nice backcountry parking lot. It would have to be signed as such and NPS may have to go so far as to issue a parking permit along with the wilderness permit during the busy part of the summer.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #3)

*“At Sunrise Trailhead and Old Campground, we generally support the proposed actions in Alternative 2, we also see value in having overnight parking on the north side and day- use parking and use only on the south side. We believe that this suggestion came up at the Open House and we encourage the Park to look closely at how the concept might be made to work with the various treatments/actions proposed otherwise for Sunrise in Alternative 2.”*

(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #4)

*“Since most visitors to the Tenaya Lake area are transient short term visitors these sites should be administered and designated as short term pullouts for restroom stops, photo ops, or other short term activity. Recognizing the high percentage of short term transients visiting Tenaya, (a majority stay for only a few minutes) some expanded parking proposed at Sunrise, Murphy Creek, and East Beach could be redesigned as pullouts for easy in and out access to more easily accommodate short term visitors even if the total number of spaces available for day long parking might be reduced by an easy access design. An easy access parking/pullout design may be more important than maximizing vehicles numbers in a very limited space where parking lot congestion could become a frustrating visitor issue. The loss of available day long parking as a result of a friendlier pullout design might be partially offset, at least at Sunrise, by developing a paved parking/pullout area in non sensitive Lodgepole cover north of Tioga road as proposed in Alternative four. Additional defined paved roadside pullouts could be considered in appropriate non sensitive tree cover especially near restrooms or viewpoints where view shed and resource issues are not a consideration.”*  
(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #8)

*“We therefore suggest that an area on the south side of the road between Sunrise and Murphy Creek, or in the Murphy Creek area, be signed, designed and designated as a view turnout with 10- minute parking specifically to accommodate these types of visitors. (Yes, we know the park doesn't generally have or enforce parking time restrictions, but hopefully people would obey the signs.) Olmstead Point is a good example of the need for, and the success of, this type of parking area. We do not believe this type of parking should be provided near East Beach, as in Alternative 5, because it simply results in the current situation, where these spaces are used by long- term beach visitors, with heavy visual and soil impacts in the area.”*  
(Recreation Organization; Correspondence #15)

**Response:** NPS project coordinators, resource specialists, and management reviewed the public comments related to this concern, and developed a modified preferred alternative to best address public concerns and protect park resources. Upon consideration of these suggestions by the Tenaya Lake planning and Executive Leadership team, the modified preferred alternative includes the following:

- Additional defined and designated paved roadside pullouts in appropriate non- sensitive tree cover, especially near restrooms or viewpoints where viewshed and resource issues are not a consideration.
- Provide roadside parking west of Sunrise in order to reduce the extent of the proposed parking lot expansion at Sunrise.
- Designate some roadside parking spaces as short- term pullouts for restroom stops, photo ops, or other short term activity.
- Provide short- term parking at the northeast corner of Tenaya Lake.
- The NPS considered designating overnight parking, but rejected the idea after looking at several season’s worth of visitor use data at Tenaya Lake that demonstrates overnight use parking at Tenaya Lake as only a very small percentage of overall use.

**Concern 25: The NPS should eliminate parking on eastbound Tioga Road.**

*“Parking along the lakeshore on Tioga Road between Sunrise Trailhead and Murphy Creek has always been a major problem. Parking in the east bound direction has especially been, to put it mildly, a major hazard. Only Alternative 4 is bold enough to eliminate parking eastbound, transforming the lakeshore into the pedestrian area it always should have been.”*  
(Individual; Correspondence #11)

**Response:** Upon careful consideration of public safety, visitor capacity, and parking demand at Tenaya Lake, NPS determined that provision of roadside parking (55 spaces) is appropriate in locations that would not have an adverse effect on public safety, visual quality, or park resources.

## Wetlands

**Concern 26: NPS should provide an additional option for crossing Tenaya Creek to reduce adverse effects to wetlands.**

*“The other concern [regarding the informal log crossing at Tenaya Creek] is that when a crossing such as the log is the only option, various other crossings will be sought out, resulting in more trampling of wetland vegetation, pocking, etc... a simple rustic, low expense, but solid narrow wooden footbridge be approved for a crossing at the site, with rock- way trail on both side leading up to the footbridge.”*  
(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #4)

**Response:** As noted in the EA (refer to page 3- 39), the NPS recognizes informal trails within wetland habitat are created during seasonal flooding and periods of high water. Minor improvements and structures are proposed where appropriate to address this issue (i.e. East Beach boardwalk segments), while minimizing effects to scenic quality, visitor experience, and park resources. Upon careful consideration of this concern, the NPS determined to retain the Tenaya Creek inlet as a natural area, with no formal access or improvement across the inlet. Flooding and creek flow is seasonal (typically during the spring snowmelt), similar to the outlet and other areas surrounding the lake, and may require visitors to walk across the beach in this location. An interpretive program is proposed as part of the Tenaya Lake Plan to inform and educate visitors regarding the seasonal hydrology and sensitive habitats of the lake and surrounding environment.

## Noise

**Concern 27: The NPS should consider appropriate methods for speed control that do not create noise.**

*“...Using rumble strips for speed control would be an impediment to listening to the sounds of nature. They can be so noisy that residents in neighborhoods in Los Angeles, where the strip have been installed, have forced the city to remove them. This method would not be appropriate for use in a park....”*  
(Individual; Correspondence #7)

**Response:** In accordance with NPS *Management Policies* (2001) and Director’s Order 47 (NPS 2000), *Sound Preservation and Noise Management*, an important part of the NPS mission is

preservation of natural soundscapes associated with national park units. The NPS evaluated the potential impacts to soundscape resulting from proposed actions in all of the alternatives in the Tenaya Lake Area Plan EA, and identified operation of the rumble strips as a long-term, minor, adverse effect. The EA Errata includes information clarifying the maximum noise level allowed upon development of the rumble strips (5dBA above existing).

## Cultural Resources

### Concern 28: The NPS should include correct American Indian history in planning documents.

*“Regarding the assessment of Tenaya lake, the area was a known Yosemite - Mono Lake Paiute place. paiutes had camped there for eons before non- Indians entered the area. The name Tenaya is a Paiute word and Chief Tenaya was a born at Mono lake from an Ahwahneechee Paiute father and a Mono Paiute mother. Lafayette H. Bunnell wrote that Chief Tenaya was the founder of the Paiute Colony of Ahwahnee in Yosemite Valley. Bunnell also wrote that Tenaya spoke Paiute and not Miwok, if Tenaya could speak Miwok Major James Savage could speak to Tenaya, but Savage couldn't. Savage could speak Miwok, even the royal Miwok language. Miwoks were not indigenous to Yosemite, but were afraid afraid to enter Yosemite Valley, also documented by Dr. Lafayette H. Bunnell in his book the Discovery of Yosemite. It was Miwok chief Cow' Chitty or Kau'citti, who helped the Mariposa Battalion track and hunt down Chief Tenaya's people at Lake Tenaya. If not for Cow'chitty's help the white military would have never found Tenaya's other camp on the shores of Lake Tenaya. Becasue of Cow'chitty's help the white military heaped praise on him for his assistance. So why would the Park Service place the traitors to Chief Tenaya and the Indian people of Yosemite in the lead role and not the Paiute people? There are no Yosemite Miwoks. That is false and made up. In fact some of the leadership of the Southern Sierra Miwuks are the direct descendents of the traitor Cow'chitty. The Park Service never conducted a true geneology of the Indians of Yosemite, but let a biased Craig Bates conduct the geneology. Then the Park Service asked teh Miwoks but not the Yosemite- Mono Lake Paiutes about the genealogy of the Indian people of the area. If the Park Service reviewed the Yosemite- Mono Lake Paiute material, that is from several governmental sources, the Park Service would see the truth about the Indian history of Yosemite, not the manufactured myth of the Yosemite Miwoks. We request that you do not put the Miwoks and Mewuks in leadership roles in this project or any other project that involves the original Indians of Yosemite, because they are not indigenous to Yosemite.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #10)

**Response:** The summary of American Indian history within the park and at Tenaya Lake was developed based on consultation with American Indian Tribes and review of published reports and documents. The NPS will continue to consult with all affiliated American Indian tribes during subsequent planning and implementation phases of the project—including all interpretive wayside exhibits and programs. Park management has announced the intent to review the history of American Indians in the park to ensure that the park is presenting correct information.

## Visitor Experience

### Concern 29: The NPS should manage Tenaya Lake as a spiritual destination or icon.

*“How can Park management of Tenaya Lake alter current conditions so that the Lake becomes more of that spiritual destination- spiritual icon that not only provides for the cultural heritage of the Me- Wuk, but also inspires other visitors today and in the future? That question is especially important because many presently see Tenaya Lake as a 10- minute photo stop... a place to pee... a place to get a quick stretch of legs as they rush toward Tuolumne Meadows... or nice place for a crowd of family and friends to hoot, play loud music, drink, or otherwise "recreate" at a scenic summer destination. None of those activities are openly undesirable, but given the spiritual iconic theme of the native people, there is the challenge of softening the crowded conditions and the recreational disturbance at this inspiring venue in order to value its spiritual significance.”*

(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #4)

**Response:** The NPS concurs with this statement that Tenaya Lake is a spiritual destination for both American Indians and other visitors. During development of project alternatives, the NPS considered the historical and current use of the lake, and developed a plan that balances preservation of the area’s significance with a diverse range of visitor experience opportunities.

### Concern 30: The NPS should provide safe crossing over Tenaya Creek.

*“... [we do] NOT support leaving the informal log crossing over Tenaya Creek for a number of reasons. Seasonally during the early wet season it is often a bog or wetland making anyone trying to get to the log having to wade or slop through mud. After that is period where the log is periodically wet and where there are safety concerns. More of a concern is that only a limited number of visitors can safely use the log and most seniors will be eliminated from going further.”*

(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #4)

**Response:** Upon careful consideration of this concern, the NPS determined to minimize structural development and retain the Tenaya Creek inlet as a natural area, with no formal access or improvement across the inlet. Flooding and creek flow is seasonal (typically during the spring snowmelt), similar to the outlet and other areas surrounding the lake, and may require visitors to wade through water along the beach during the seasonal highwater in this location.

### Concern 31: The NPS should restore the Old Campground area and west end of Tenaya Lake.

*“Sunrise Trailhead/Old Campground: Alternative 4 is the only alternative that eliminates parking in the Old Campground area. Ever since the closing of the Old Campground, I've believed this area should be restored as much as possible, transforming the western end of the lake into an area where people can walk, sit, and take in the magnificent view without being next to a parking lot.”*

(Individual; Correspondence #11)

*“Adding stock/horse trailer spaces as in Alternatives 2, 3, and 5 only intensifies the violation of this precious area; I am amazed and appalled that this idea ever got past the preliminary planning stage to be considered for final implementation. The western and southern sides of*

*Tenaya Lake should be pedestrian areas with the parking confined to the Sunrise Trailhead. Only Alternative 4 provides for the ecological restoration of the west end of Tenaya Lake.”*  
(Individual; Correspondence #11)

**Response:** Upon careful consideration of public comments, the modified preferred alternative retains the design of the Old Campground area and associated parking; however, the Sunrise Trailhead parking area has been reduced from 66 to 48 spaces. This design provides a location for mule and horse stock, which is a critical function of the High Sierra Camps, American Indian practices, and park operations. The separation of uses (equestrian use and automobiles) is recognized by the NPS as a critical feature to minimize potential public safety issues. The Tenaya Lake Plan proposes a more efficient use of space in this location (while continuing the existing use), and restoration of wetland and upland habitat in the vicinity.

**Concern 32: The NPS should consider good signage and design to guide and inform visitors.**

*“Management objectives can be met more easily when good signage educates and informs the public, and when proactive project design steers visitors to appropriate sites for activities rather than allowing uninformed members of the public to blindly choose on the spot which direction to travel, or where to go to the bathroom, or where/how to park their vehicle.”*  
(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #4)

**Response:** The NPS considered this issue, and incorporated an interpretive program as well as wayfinding improvements into the plan (refer to page 2- 17 of the EA).

**Concern 33: The NPS should provide informal turnouts to allow for quick, spontaneous stops in scenic areas.**

*“Removal of informal pull offs along Tioga Road does not allow visitors to spontaneously stop and take in a view that they find interesting. In my visits to Yosemite and other National Parks, I have found that the ability to pull off the road and take in a scenic vista is an important part of my visitor experience. There are times when something catches my eye and I want the opportunity to make a quick stop to enjoy the view and then go onto my next destination. This is especially important when a visitor only has a limited amount of time to spend in a park and they want to experience as much as the park as they possible can and not waste time circling a parking lot looking for a spot and hiking back to the area for a quick look...This pattern of removing pull offs and parking areas as a method to control crowding of the park needs to cease especially since this leads to more traffic congestion. Otherwise, the Disneyfication of Yosemite will continue and you might as well put in a monorail and never let a visitor get out to actually experience nature.”*  
(Individual; Correspondence #7)

*“A View Turnout with Short- Term Lakeside Parking Should be Provided We are concerned that the Proposed Alternative 2 provides insufficient accommodation for visitors who just want to pull off to the side of the road, have a brief look at the lake, take a photo and be on their way. In particular, we are concerned that these sorts of visitors will slow down and stop in the middle of the road (the way people often do when looking at bears and deer), park in the undesignated sites on the north side of the road that would otherwise be used by climbers, or clog up the parking areas and trails, where they would really prefer not to be in the first place. While we certainly support encouraging visitors to get out of their cars and into the park, we still feel it is important to accommodate those who just need to look and go.”*  
(Recreation Organization; Correspondence #15)

**Response:** NPS project coordinators, resource specialists, and management reviewed the public comments related to this concern, and developed a modified preferred alternative to best address public concerns and protect park resources. Upon consideration of these suggestions by the Tenaya Lake planning and Executive Leadership team, the modified preferred alternative includes the following:

- Define and designate additional paved roadside pullouts in appropriate non- sensitive tree cover, especially near restrooms or viewpoints where viewshed and resource issues are not a consideration.
- Designate some roadside parking spaces as short- term pullouts for restroom stops, photo ops, or other short term activity.
- Provide short- term parking at the northeast corner of Tenaya Lake.

**Concern 34: The NPS should provide an opportunity for a quiet visitor experience at East Beach.**

*“Access to East Beach under the Preferred Alternative Eliminates the Possibility of a Quiet Experience and Should Be Revised The current pattern of use at East Beach presents the visitor with a pleasing choice of beach experiences. The visitor can choose the crowded, noisy, social and convenient environment near the road or the quiet, private and distant environment at the far end of the beach. This situation allows the visitor to choose the experience that best suits their needs. It is also consistent with the need to preserve wilderness character on the east side of the lake. The Proposed Alternative 2 (and alternatives 3 and 5) would effectively destroy this range of experiences and homogenize the beach experience for all visitors. In particular, it would eliminate the possibility of having a quiet and private experience on the beach by dumping all beach- goers in the middle of the beach. On busy weekend days in the peak season, those seeking a quieter experience would have nowhere to go. It would make no sense for them to be on the road side of the central social area because that would have more traffic noise and many people on the trail alongside the road. They could still try the south end, but the noisy families and raucous groups in the center social area would sprawl south, crowding the quiet seekers into the far end of the beach and effectively eliminating the possibility of a quiet and private experience in that direction. Nor would the West Beach serve as a replacement. The south end of the west beach is closer to the road, narrow, and shorter than the east beach, and is in shade in the later part of the day when beach use is highest. It simply doesn't have the pleasant and expansive ambiance of the East Beach.”*  
(Recreation Organization; Correspondence #15)

**Response:** The NPS carefully considered all public comments during the scoping period for the project and the EA. The modified preferred alternative addresses key resource issues, while intending to accommodate desired visitor experience and protect park resources. The modified preferred alternative eliminates a designated crossing at the Tenaya inlet, which may result in a less populated beach area south of the inlet.

## Park Operations

**Concern 35: The NPS should evaluate whether projected levels of staffing and resources are sufficient for the project.**

*“But no matter how well planned an Area Plan may be, and no matter how well designed the signs may be, it is essential that appropriately stationed personnel be located so as to not only educate area visitors, but to also enforce regulations and safety. In our staff’s quick review of the EA, the care of planning staff in considering thoughtful options and actions was highly evident. It is hopeful that the final plan will only be given approval if the Park has evaluated whether projected levels of staffing and resources will be sufficient to manage visitor use so that the new Area Plan achieves resource objectives. Having an expensive, well- designed layout of infrastructure and facilities only produces so much benefit. Park staff are essential in order to implement the plan and gently, diligently direct, cajole, encourage, and manage visitors to prevent harm to sensitive high mountain resources.”*

(Conservation Organization; Correspondence #4)

**Response:** In addition to public scoping, the NPS held a series of internal meetings with park management, and key resource, planning, and operational staff. Park operations are considered an important aspect of the plan, ranging from maintenance of vault toilets, trash and recycling collection, visitor and resource protection, and sustainability or durability of materials. The plan identifies improvements including interpretive materials, natural resources restoration, designated and clearly delineated parking areas, and placement of visitor amenities that would result in a long- term beneficial effect to park operations (refer to page 3- 155 of the EA). Park management has considered the anticipated effect on park operations, and determined that staff is adequate to serve this project.

## OUT OF SCOPE COMMENTS

All comments were considered by planning staff and forwarded to appropriate park offices for review. No out of scope comments were identified. All correspondence is available for review on the Yosemite National Park website, Tenaya Lake Area Plan project page at: <http://www.nps.gov/yose/parkmgmt/tenaya.htm>.

*(page intentionally left blank)*





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

[www.nps.gov/yose/planning/](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning/)

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public land and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is on the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

May 2011

Printed on recycled paper