

Yosemite National Park

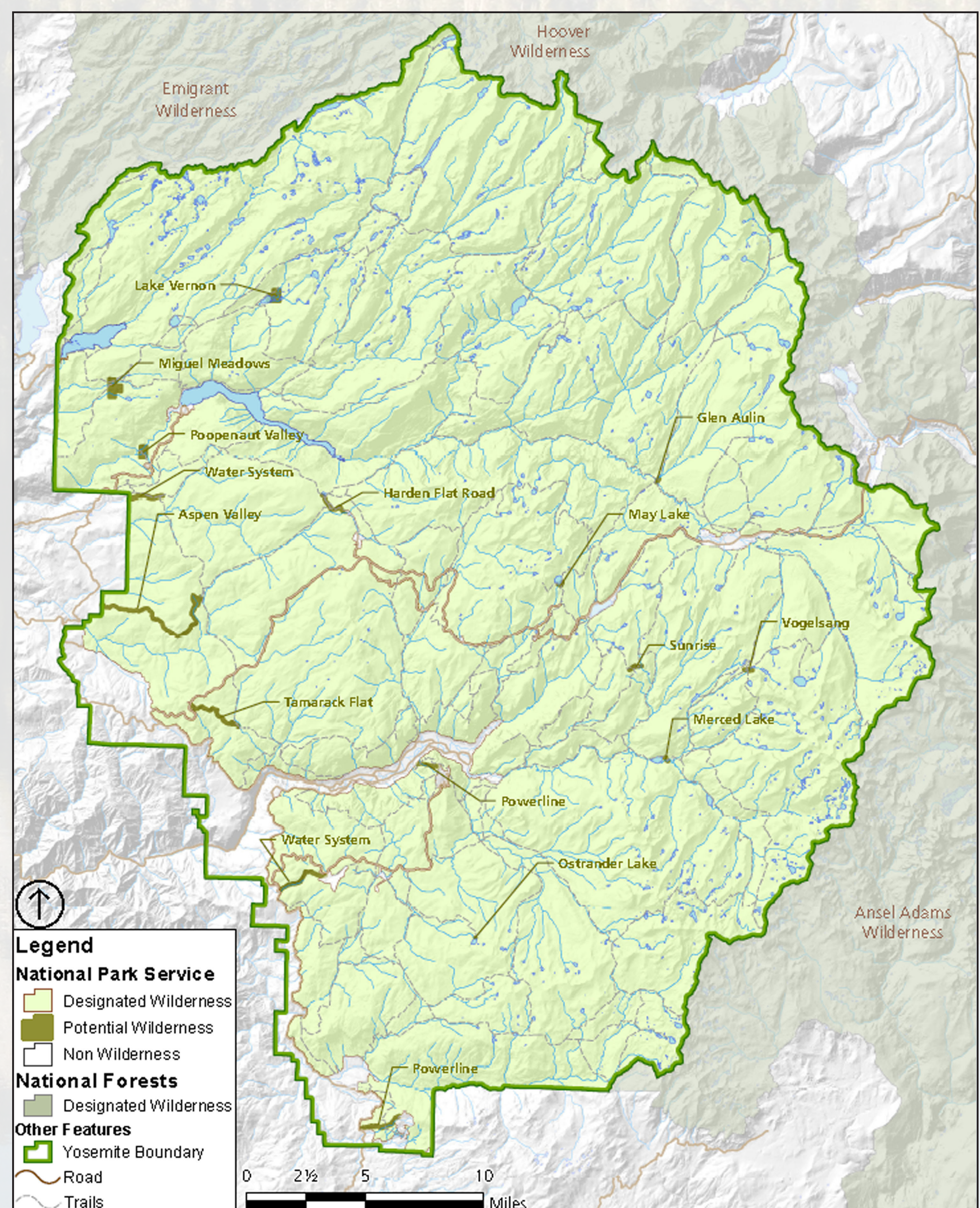
Wilderness Stewardship Plan



About Yosemite National Park

Yosemite National Park lies in the central Sierra Nevada Range in the heart of California. Originally established under the Yosemite Grant of 1864 to protect the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias and Yosemite Valley, Yosemite has grown over the last 150 years to now encompass nearly three quarters of a million acres of land area. Its close proximity to major metropolitan areas make it a popular destination, with visitors enjoying over 100,000 use-nights and approximately 400,000 to 500,000 use-days per year. Visitors participate in many activities including backpacking, rock climbing, camping, horseback riding, fishing, and day hiking.

Over 704,000 acres, or about 94% of the park, is designated as wilderness and potential wilderness additions, managed under the mandates of the Wilderness Act (1964) and the California Wilderness Act (1984). The Yosemite Wilderness is renowned for its granite peaks and domes, glacial valleys, alpine and subalpine lakes, and dramatic waterfalls. It encompasses the upper watersheds of the Tuolumne and Merced Rivers, each originating near the crest of the Sierra Nevada Range at over 13,000 feet, and dropping to less than 3,000 feet at the park boundary. The large disparity in elevation range within the wilderness supports a wide diversity of plant and animal communities, including threatened and endangered species. The Yosemite Wilderness has been inhabited by people for thousands of years, and is rich in cultural resources including archeological sites, historic districts, buildings and structures, and properties with religious and cultural significance to American Indian tribes and groups.



The Wilderness Act provides the strongest legal protection afforded to any lands in the United States. Lands designated as wilderness must be managed in a way that allows the land to maintain its wilderness character. Potential impacts of visitor and administrative use require careful and thorough planning to ensure the preservation of high-quality experiences and resources. The Yosemite Wilderness possesses unique character and provides outstanding recreational opportunities, both of which can be protected through long-range planning.