



Yosemite National Park Bridalveil Fall Rehabilitation



Public Scoping Comment Analysis Report

June 27, 2017

National Park Service

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Acronyms

NPS	National Park Service
PEPC	Planning, Environment, and Public Comment
CSERC	Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Bridalveil Fall is the first major waterfall that visitors encounter upon entering the iconic Yosemite Valley. The purpose of the Bridalveil Fall Area Rehabilitation Project is to:

- Improve visitor services at the base of the waterfall, including restroom facilities
- Improve accessibility for all users
- Protect natural and cultural resources in the area
- Reduce crowding on the trails and the viewing platform
- Improve safety and reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflicts
- Improve interpretation and wayfinding

The project will implement actions prescribed in the *Merced River Plan (2014)* for the Bridalveil Fall area.

The environmental assessment for the project will consider options such as a loop trail system to reduce crowding and enhance viewing opportunities; an accessible path of travel to an expanded viewing platform; a redesigned existing parking area within its existing footprint for more efficient parking; and measures to improve visitor safety and accessibility. The project will also consider changing the existing vault toilets to flush toilets, which would require installation of a mile-long sewer line under Southside Drive.

2.0 PUBLIC SCOPING PROCESS SUMMARY

The park conducted a 30-day public scoping period for the Bridalveil Fall Rehabilitation Project from April 26, 2017 through May 26, 2017. The National Park Service (NPS) provided information about the project and the public scoping period through the following means:

1. The park sent an electronic newsletter on April 17, 2017 to the Park's mailing list. The "eblast" announced the public scoping period, the date of the first public meeting, and included project information and a request for public input.
2. The park distributed an electronic press release on April 24, 2017 to area media outlets. The press release announced the public scoping period, the date of the first public meeting, and included project information and a request for public input.
3. The park posted public scoping information as well as project information on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website.
4. The park public information office participated in several media interviews prior to the scoping meeting.
5. The *Sierra Star* published an article on April 24, 2017 with public scoping details.
6. The park held one public open on May 10, 2017 from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Yosemite Auditorium to inform interested parties about the proposed project and solicit comments from members of the public in order to understand the spectrum of concerns, interests, and issues that should be considered in the planning process. Comments were invited for submission by mail or through the PEPC system and on comment forms that were made available during public scoping meeting.

During the public scoping period, the park received 22 correspondences, generating 77 individual substantive comments. Nineteen correspondences were submitted to the online PEPC system, one correspondence was a letter, one correspondence was an email, and one correspondence was a

compilation of comments during the public meeting presentation. Twenty-one of the correspondences were from California and one was from Oregon. Three correspondences were from organized groups (Appendix A).

This Public Scoping Comment Analysis Report is a summary of the written and electronic public scoping comments submitted during the 30-day public scoping period for the Bridalveil Fall Rehabilitation Project that was conducted from April 26, 2017 through May 26, 2017. In addition to presenting the concerns identified in public scoping, this report describes the comment analysis process, including the analysis of individual comments and the development of concern statements.

3.0 COMMENT ANALYSIS PROCESS

The letters and public meeting comments represented in this Public Scoping Comment Analysis Report were analyzed using a database developed by the National Park Service, known as the PEPC database.

The public scoping correspondence items (letters, emails, meeting notes, etc.) received during the scoping period were reviewed and analyzed in a series of steps. The first step was developing a coding structure to sort comments into logical groups by resource topics. The purpose of these codes allows for quick access to comments on specific topics. Once the coding structure was developed, each correspondence was reviewed to determine the discrete points expressed by the author, each of which is considered a “comment.” Each discrete comment was “coded” to associate the comment with a particular resource topic (Table 1). Each comment was then analyzed to determine whether each comment was substantive or non-substantive. This determination was based on the comments ability to inform development of the project and relevance to project issues (e.g., cultural, transportation, safety, etc.). The comment was determined to be substantive if it was determined that the comment received would inform alternative development or other parts of the planning process. Substantive comments were to develop public concern statements.

Public comments were grouped into concern statements to identify common themes expressed by the public. Public concern statements are intended to help guide the reader to comments on the specific topics of interest. They do not replace the actual comments received from individuals. Rather, concern statements are considered to be a means of summarizing information contained in original letters and the coded comment database. These public concerns identify common themes expressed by individuals or groups requesting particular lines of action by the National Park Service. Representative quotes were selected from the comments for each public concern statement to illustrate the spectrum of perspectives.

TABLE 1. PROJECT CODE ANALYSIS

Code	Code Description	Total Comment Tally
BVFR2000	Visitor Facilities	
BVFR2100	Visitor Facilities – Restrooms	9
BVFR2200	Visitor Facilities – Trails	5
BVFR2300	Visitor Facilities – Wayfinding/Orientation	7
BVFR2400	Visitor Facilities – Trash	1
BVFR3000	Park Management	
BVFR3100	Park Management - Safety	10
BVFR4000	Resources	
BVFR4100	Resources - Natural	1
BVFR4110	Resources - Wildlife	1
BVFR4200	Resources - Cultural	4

Code	Code Description	Total Comment Tally
BVFR4300	Resources - Scenic	5
BVFR4400	Resources – Air Quality	1
BVFR5000	Visitor Experience	
BVFR5100	Visitor Experience - Interpretation	2
BVFR5200	Visitor Experience – Circulation/Crowding	9
BVFR6000	Transportation	
BVFR6100	Transportation - Shuttles	5
BVFR6200	Transportation – Traffic/Congestion	4
BVFR6300	Transportation – Parking	11
BVFR6400	Transportation – Bicycles	1
BVFR7000	Other Comments	1

4.0 GUIDE TO THE PUBLIC SCOPING CONCERN SUMMARY

The concern summary organizes information by topic, along with a representative sample of supporting quotes. The following organization presents the comment information and concern statement:

SCOPING CONCERN CATEGORY

Concern Statement (expressed as a sentence).

Direct quote from a representative public comment (i.e., “I support a better organized, more efficiently designed parking area that could accommodate more vehicles.”) Comment code number, type of commenter and city of commenter: (Comment 21-4, Individual, Mariposa, CA)

5.0 PUBLIC SCOPING CONCERN SUMMARY

VISITOR FACILITIES

Restrooms (BVFR2100)

Concern 1: Most commenters requested that the National Park Service update and improve the existing restrooms, while one group considered whether restrooms are necessary at the site.

Representative quote(s):

“The most important feature in this rehabilitation effort is to replace the ugly, odiferous compostable toilets with flush toilets and to construct a new power and sewer line within the Southside drive alignment avoiding sensitive resource areas along the route to just north of the Pohono bridge connection to Yosemite’s main sewer line. This is one of the most important elements in this Project.” (Comment 16-6, Sierra Club, El Dorado Hills, CA)

“The bathroom situation has been an abomination for years now. Certainly hope that is on the list to be fixed. All that natural beauty and to have the horrible bathroom situation.” (Comment 7-1, Individual, Ahwahnee, CA)

“Yuck!!! These are one of the worst restrooms in the whole park. Because of the high volume of usage, flush toilets might be the best option. One thing that should be considered is increasing the amount of

stalls since this is a restroom that is used not only by people visiting Bridalveil Fall but also people who are at Tunnel View taking pictures and people that are entering the valley via hwy 41 since the closest restrooms are at Chinquapin.” (Comment 15-6, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

“The Sierra Club strongly opposes the relocation of the existing compostable units to Bridalveil straight to alleviate the lack of restrooms in this heavy use roadside area. It also opposes installation of semi permanent portable toilets in the roadside area. Cluttering up west valley with unsightly portable toilets or ever problematic compostable units is not the answer to resolving this issue. Yosemite’s infrastructure needs an upgrade NOT more substandard structures. If a restroom is necessary here, construct an aesthetically appropriate flush toilet and extend the sewer line proposed in Southside drive to the new Bridalveil straight site.” (Comment 16-7, Sierra Club, El Dorado Hills, CA)

“The Sierra Club shares the concern of many NPS staff opposed to the addition of any new infrastructure in west Yosemite valley so the need for a new restroom here must be carefully considered. Doing nothing may be an acceptable option after considering the impacts of insidious "infrastructure creep" in the west Valley. There were no restrooms included at the recently rehabilitated Tunnel View site. A no restroom alternative may be the preferred action at Bridalveil straight as well.” (Comment 16-8, Sierra Club, El Dorado Hills, CA)

SUPPORT FOR REPLACING EXISTING VAULT TOILET STRUCTURE

Because it is the first stop for many visitors who have just reached the Valley, Bridalveil Fall also provides the first restroom opportunity for a large percentage of Park visitors who may have traveled for two hours or longer. The current restroom facility, as was emphasized clearly during the Park staff’s Open House presentation, has major problems - ranging from undesirable odors to times with unacceptably long lines for those waiting.

A NEW TOP QUALITY RESTROOM FACILITY IS NEEDED

CSERC advocates for removing the vault toilet facility that is currently substandard and designing a new high quality restroom facility in the same style of the recently constructed restroom facility at Yosemite Falls to match the surrounding environment and to be as unobtrusive as possible. The character of the design is important, especially if the facility is intended to persist for decades at this iconic site.

A SEWER LINE EXTENSION IS DESIRED AND SUPPORTED

Extending a new sewer line to accommodate the construction of a flushing restroom facility is an obvious goal that CSERC supports so as to ensure that there is no subsurface contamination of water. It also will enhance the visitor experience. Park staff explained at the Open House that in order to protect both cultural and natural resources, the sewer line and associated electrical infrastructure would be most appropriately placed in the footprint of Southside Drive. CSERC supports the envisioned extension of the sewer line and its placement under the pavement of Southside Drive to reach the Bridalveil Fall site.” (Comment 18-2, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), Twain Harte, CA)

“I support a comfort station with flush toilets that would meet ADA standards and provide enough fixtures to minimize long queues of visitors waiting to use the restroom.” (Comment 21-5, Individual, Mariposa, CA)

Trails (BVFR2200)

Concern 2: The National Park Service should expand the trail system around the exterior of the parking lot to separate vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

Representative quote(s):

“Perhaps a path on the perimeter of the parking lot could prevent pedestrians from wandering the parking lot.” (Comment 6-5, Individual, Groveland, CA)

Concern 3: The National Park Service should ensure that trails are accessible to all.

“First off, I think it's a wonderful ideal to work on this area and improve visitor experience. This is a wonderful area that guests with minimized mobility can get the opportunity to capture a small glimpse of Yosemite's magic!” (Comment 13-1, Individual, Groveland, CA)

“Making the area ADA compliant is going to be a challenge. The last part of the trail is currently extremely steep and slippery. Steps would be the best choice but it would not allow people with disabilities access.” (Comment 15-2, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

“As for the trails, this is the time to ensure they are ADA compliant. The bridges are historical and functional, they should be updated and incorporated into project.” (Comment 19-4, Individual, Coarsegold, CA)

“I support visitors with disabilities being able to go on accessible pathways to the main viewing area from both the parking area from the west and from the parking area along Bridalveil Straight from the east.” (Comment 21-7, Individual, Mariposa, CA)

Wayfinding/Orientation (BVFR2300)

Concern 4: The National Park Service should add interpretive signage to the area.

Representative quote(s):

“There should be signage describing the history, geology and cultural aspects of the Bridalveil Fall area.” (Comment 15-1, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

Concern 5: The National Park Service should minimize interpretive and wayfinding signage and consider electronic alternatives.

Representative quote(s):

“Signage for interpretation and wayfinding if excessive can have a significant negative impact on the visual quality of the area. Consideration should be given to minimizing the number and size of these signs. A project proposal to employ an electronic alternative to interpretation and wayfinding via tablets and smartphones could be considered to ameliorate the signage issue.” (Comment 16-5, Sierra Club, El Dorado Hills, CA)

Concern 6: The National Park Service should include more roadway signage to help direct traffic and alleviate congestion.

Representative quote(s):

*“THE NEED FOR CLEAR DIRECTIVE SIGNAGE BEFORE THE INTERSECTION
A substantial percentage of visitors coming into Yosemite Valley from El Portal or from Highway 120 may not see the option to move into the right lane and turn south onto Wawona Road to access the BF parking area. The current single sign jams the unclear words "Bridalveil Fall " on top of other sign*

wordage, without making it clear that there is either a BF parking area or a restroom option accessible by turning right.

As visitors approach the intersection of Southside Drive and Highway 41, they should be appropriately informed by improved signage that clarifies the option of turning right onto Highway 41 to access the parking lot.” (Comment 18-3, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), Twain Harte, CA)

Concern 7: The National Park Service should include more signage to improve wayfinding.

Representative quote(s):

“Creating any new trail will be most effective if appropriate signage at parking locations makes it clear about the option to go to and from the destination by staying on the loop trail. Signage in the parking lot or parking area as well as at Bridalveil Straight may be needed, and the signs could encourage users to flow the same direction on the loop.” (Comment 18-7, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), Twain Harte, CA)

“I hike frequently, and one of the things I would like to see is improvement of wayfinding for the Valley Loop Trail.” (Comment 20-3, Letter – Non-governmental)

“I support a trail system and wayfinding that is less confusing and would allow visitors to better explore this beautiful area.” (Comment 21-2, Individual, Mariposa, CA)

Trash (BVFR2400)

Concern 8: The National Park Service should provide upgraded trash receptacles.

Representative quote(s):

“I really would like to see the bathrooms updated and possibly better trash receptacles. There is often trash overflowing during the busy days of summer.” (Comment 6-3, Individual, Groveland, CA)

Park Management – Safety (BVFR3100)

Concern 9: The National Park Service should improve roadway safety and address traffic congestion in the area.

Representative quote(s):

“BRIDALVEIL STRAIGHT PARKING AND SAFETY PROBLEMS

Currently, a majority of arriving visitors heading east on Southside Drive are not motivated by the existing signage to navigate over to the Bridalveil Fall parking area for their visit to the area. Instead, many continue east where they begin to see vehicles parked along the start of Bridalveil Straight. Some may also be distracted by the impressive sight of Bridalveil Fall coming into view on their right. Those who decide to stop and enjoy the area must immediately find an open slot amidst already parked cars or must wind their way forward despite safety hazards such as pedestrians crossing in front of them or individuals blocking traffic as they stand in the road and take photographs.

The Park staff conveyed that there have been surprisingly few injuries at the Bridalveil Straight, but the area is clearly a hazardous area as it is currently managed. It could be significantly improved to make

it safer for pedestrians and for those driving vehicles. A dedicated bus parking area on the right side of Southside Drive could reduce the conflict posed by buses unloading passengers out the right-hand side doors into lanes of traffic (an issue that currently exists). As CSERC staff discussed with Park staff at the Open House meeting, CSERC supports a zig-zag parking space design for bus or RV parking that would increase the efficiency of parking without taking up any new parking area. It would also allow buses or RVs to exit their parking space without backing into traffic. Such a zig-zag edge parking space design, as commonly used at transit centers, could be one component of improving road-side parking at Bridalveil Straight.

On the north side of the double lane area where parking is now allowed, visitors often exit their vehicles and dodge cars or buses as they cross both lanes to access Bridalveil Fall and the trails. In order to provide a "directive" or "restricting" natural barrier to discourage arriving visitors from randomly crossing the busy double lanes of traffic, CSERC encourages the Park to consider creating a small vegetative buffer or split rail fencing between the north side parking lane and the lanes of traffic. The vegetative buffer of planted bushes or other plants could be used to direct pedestrians towards the crosswalk and to discourage attempts to cross both lanes of traffic randomly elsewhere.” (Comment 18-5, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), Twain Harte, CA)

“In order to reduce traffic accidents. . . I urge the National Park system to heavily promote and incentives the shuttle system.” (Comment 8-1, Individual, Fresno, CA)

“This is a great plan. . . improving safety . . . should be the priority of the park.” (Comment 9-2, Individual, Exeter, CA)

“Right now, it's hard to feel that awe of our first gaze at El Cap and Bridalveil when it's blocked by cars and dangerous to pedestrians.” (Comment 12-4, Individual, Portland, OR)

“Bridalveil Straight: A more dangerous issue is that people do not always use the crosswalk to access the viewing area and jump out into the road from in between cars and do not look for oncoming cars.” (Comment 15-11, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

“We do hope you have enough staffing for traffic control and funding to better this situations that really affect visitors safety and enjoyment of the park.” (Comment 17-2, Individual, Oakhurst, CA)

“When visitors enter Yosemite Valley on Southside Drive, there is one sign, it is with three other directive signs. When people come in, they don't see that one word crammed into the others. They end up in the straight and miss the right turn. If the planning would like to focus on people parking and using the restrooms, having at least a second sign at the intersection that shows Bridalveil Fall would be good. There are hazards in the straight area, for example there are no caution signs for people to think about not standing in the lane. People were standing in the lane today.” (Comment 20-4, Letter – Non-governmental)

“The turn into the parking lot is really dangerous.” (Comment 20-6, Letter – Non-governmental)

Concern 10: The National Park Service should make safety improvements to trails in the area.

Representative quote(s):

“As the trail currently is, people have a tendency to slip and fall on the final approach to the viewing area and in other areas of the trail when it is wet. The final approach to the falls needs to be made of a

material that will allow more traction when wet. I have found that the Trex boardwalks are slippery when wet and/or icy and should not be used. I can't tell you how many times we have fallen on the east trail to Yosemite Falls when it is icy.” (Comment 15-3, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

“There also needs to be more signage about the danger of climbing on the rocks at the base of the falls. Maybe a fence should be erected to stop people from going into that area.” (Comment 15-5, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

RESOURCES

Natural (BVFR4100)

Concern 11: The National Park Service should protect the natural resources in the park.

Representative quote(s):

“This is a great plan. . . . protect the natural resources of the area . . . should be the priority of the park.” (Comment 9-3, Individual, Exeter, CA)

Wildlife (BVFR4110)

Concern 12: The National Park Service should reduce wildlife vehicular deaths.

Representative quote(s):

“In order to reduce . . . wildlife vehicular deaths, I urge the National Park system to heavily promote and incentives the shuttle system.” (Comment 8-2, Individual, Fresno, CA)

Cultural (BVFR4200)

Concern 13: The National Park Service should consult with tribes and agencies responsible for historic properties and monitor impacts to cultural resources.

Representative quote(s):

“Concerned about the cultural sensitivity of the area, both historically and prehistorically. I hope any new construction or realignment of roads, trails, parking, or comfort facilities is carefully monitored for impact to cultural artifacts and sites.” (Comment 12-5, Individual, Portland, OR)

“A few final thoughts: New trail locations to/from falls and parking (both lot and expanded lanes) should require consultations. This should be done for Historical (people) and Cultural (Indian) positions and as an opportunity to utilize prior historical site surveys (prior burial area?). Next, keep the building style or theme (and color) to one that is observed throughout the Park.” (Comment 19-6, Individual, Coarsegold, CA)

Concern 14: The National Park Service should provide a place of quiet reflection to honor the cultural significance of the area.

Representative quote(s):

“In whatever way it can be achieved - - given the cultural significance of the Bridalveil Falls area and the high level of visitation that occurs there - - CSERC advocates for the creation of a quiet space to view and to contemplate Bridalveil Fall away from the crowds where visitors can have a different experience. Either the option described previously or a carefully chosen siting of a small spur trail off the one or two loop trails could provide such an opportunity. Consultation with tribes should inform this component if there is indeed interest by the tribes in having such a "quiet area" designed to be responsive to the possible uses or objectives shared by the tribes.” (Comment 18-8, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), Twain Harte, CA)

“Our staff has been looking at the same issues as issues of concern or opportunities; one thing you brought up is cultural significance. Have we asked if an experience could be provided that didn't involve being in the mist and in the crowds? A more discreet opportunity for those who see this as a spiritual place, by the tribes for instance? Has there been any thought about this?” (Comment 20-2, Letter - Non-Governmental)

Scenic (BVFR4300)

Concern 15: The National Park Service should protect the natural beauty of the area.

Representative quote(s):

“Wider trails, restrooms, parking and pedestrian modifications will further detract from the beauty and elegance of this natural phenomenon.” (Comment 5-2, Individual, Columbia, CA)

“Often the first impression on attaining the valley floor is a congestion of cars, oversize vehicles, and pedestrians at the Bridalveil Straight. It's frustrating, unsightly, and unfriendly.” (Comment 12-1, Individual, Portland, OR)

“It would be lovely if the streetside parking were limited or even removed to assist incoming traffic and the views.” (Comment 12-3, Individual, Portland, OR)

Concern 16: The National Park Service should clear vistas to improve views.

Representative quote(s):

“Conservative tree removal is needed to improve the view.” (Comment 15-9, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

“Several historic views of Bridalveil Fall have been obscured by vegetative growth over the decades. There are few places to get a view of the entire waterfall. I support vista clearing to provide more views, including restoring the historic ones, to park visitors.” (Comment 21-8, Individual, Mariposa, CA)

Air Quality (BVFR4400)

Concern 17: The National Park Service should promote the shuttle system to reduce CO2 emissions.

Representative quote(s):

“In order to reduce . . . CO2 emissions I urge the National Park system to heavily promote and incentives the shuttle system.” (Comment 8-3, Individual, Fresno, CA)

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Interpretation (BVFR5100)

Concern 18: The National Park Service should improve interpretive displays.

Representative quote(s):

“I support better signage and interpretive displays to enrich the visitor experience and help them explore and better understand the entire Bridalveil Fall area.” (Comment 21-9, Individual, Mariposa, CA)

“I hope inspiration could be drawn from the Lower Yosemite Fall rehab from several years back. They did well with the aesthetics of the trail, accessibility, interpretation and wayfaring, and a respect for natural and cultural sites. Bridalveil is often the first stop in the valley, and as such there should be a bit of an arrival and "first exploration" feel to the area.” (Comment 12-6, Individual, Portland, OR)

Circulation/Crowding (BVFR5200)

Concern 19: The National Park Service should address congestion and crowding on the viewing platform and trails.

Representative quote(s):

*“REDUCING CONGESTION AND CROWDING AT PLATFORM AND ON TRAILS
Many different design improvements could be made to help reduce crowding at the viewing platform and on the trails in the project area. Currently the Bridalveil Fall layout provides a single primary destination for visitors - the viewing platform. CSERC suggests consideration of various options for creating additional "destinations" or stops for visitors that could diminish the concentrated crowding on the primary viewing platform.*

Our staff recognizes that there will be many resource, scenic, and social considerations that may be part of the Park's redesign of trails, the viewing platform experience, and management of the overall area. Any suggestions provided at this stage should be carefully analyzed for potential impacts to habitat, wildlife, water quality, etc.

Two options CSERC encourages for consideration would be to either create one major loop trail or to alternatively create loop trails coming from both the parking area and from the Bridalveil Straight locations. Loop trails could reduce concentrated crowding that now comes from large numbers of visitors going in and out on one major trail. CSERC notes that designing such loop trails also could provide opportunities for the strategic placement of unobtrusive interpretive signs in areas where visitors would be encouraged to linger in an area off the trail. The benefits of creating loop trails increases interest if trail users have opportunities for seeing the Fall from different perspectives.

As another option, CSERC notes that the creation of a second viewing platform could also help disperse visitors. Park staff discussed such a concept, and placing it in an area at some distance from the existing platform would seem to be strategic.

Obviously, in designing the layout of trails, there are many alternatives. One approach CSERC encourages for consideration would be for the Park to create a loop trail from each main parking area, but to keep the loop trails from infringing into the currently mostly undisturbed areas upslope from the

current main trail. As was described by Park staff at the Open House, a low impact trail from the south side of the main parking area could wind through some large boulders and end at a particularly good viewing site in the area upslope and to the southwest of the viewing platform. Rather than making that trail a loop trail, by intentionally defining it as a less congested view-site destination, it could allow for those who desire a less crowded and noisy experience an option that would contrast with the higher-use loop trails that would carry the majority of visitor use and allow access to the viewer platform or platforms located below the Fall.” (Comment 18-6, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), Twain Harte, CA)

“Complaints I have heard about the park have not been overcrowding of this particular venue. If it is to inconvenient for visitors to visit Bridal Veil Falls TOO BAD.” (Comment 5-4, Individual, Columbia, CA)

“This is a great plan. Reducing crowding on trails. . .should be the priority of the park.” (Comment 9-1, Individual, Exeter, CA)

“My only comment is in regards to "Reduce crowding on the trails and the viewing platform. As a full time guide in Yosemite, I've often thought that the best way to "Reduce crowding on the trails and the viewing platform" is to make more viewing platforms and trails that access them, in the Bridalveil area, that way you can "Thin" the crowds that currently have access to the area via the Bridalveil parking area and along South side drive. This would give guests the chance to view other amazing "views" of Bridalveil falls without having to drive all the way around the valley to the North side drive. I personally believe that "thinning" the crowd that is currently able to park should be the main goal of this project.

If you were to build a trail that lead to another "viewing" platform that was constructed on the west side of the falls, along the canyon wall and also one on the east side of the falls, this would split the current crowd by 1/3. Possibly even adding a slightly longer trail that accessed more of the west side of the canyon to a higher viewing platform for guests that wanted a slightly more engaged walk. This would split the current crowds to 1/4th their current level on the lower and "Only" main viewing platform. You could even get a trail closer to the base of the falls for a 1/5 split.

I believe this could all be done with minimal interference with the current area and with improved signage, it would provide more opportunity for guests to experience and learn about Yosemite.

I know you have your plans laid out already and I'm just a guide with an idea, but as someone that plays and guides in the park, on these trails, at all times of the year, this is just an idea I thought would help our visitors fall even more in love with Yosemite and it would help to remove some of the feeling that Yosemite is becoming the "Disneyland" of National Parks because it's so overcrowded.” (Comment 13-2, Individual, Groveland, CA)

“The viewing platform is too small for the amount of people wanting to be at the base of the falls. However, I am concerned that making the area larger and/or adding a circular path to the falls will impact the undeveloped feeling of the area. I enjoy the feeling of naturalness when I go to the base of the falls.” (Comment 15-4, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

“Expanding additional trail access to the Falls by constructing a low gradient loop trail to a modestly enlarged viewing platform would improve the visitor experience and alleviate much of the trail congestion that prevails on heavy usage days.” (Comment 16-4, Sierra Club, El Dorado Hills, CA)

“Have you ever considered not doing anything? No parking? Making it not accessible to the public. Bring it back to nature? Yes, I would like to see no cars in the valley. A lot of people are coming in and it's more congested. I'm wondering if anyone wondered if we don't do anything at all.” (Comment 20-6, Letter – Non-governmental)

“I support a trail system with one or more loops that would better distribute visitors throughout the area rather than concentrate them all in one path up and down to the primary viewpoint.” (Comment 21-3, Individual, Mariposa, CA)

“I support a sufficiently sized viewing bridge and/or terrace that would provide enough space for visitors to have an unimpeded view of the waterfall.” (Comment 21-6, Individual, Mariposa, CA)

TRANSPORTATION

Shuttles (BVFR6100)

Concern 20: The National Park Service should enhance the shuttle system.

Representative quote(s):

“In order to reduce traffic accidents, wildlife vehicular deaths, and CO2 emissions I urge the National Park system to heavily promote and incentives the shuttle system.” (Comment 8-3, Individual, Fresno, CA)

“Shuttle buses are GREAT and a good shuttle stop in the area would be very nice.” (Comment 12-9, Individual, Portland, OR)

“Make sure that the free Shuttle Bus serving the Bridalveil Fall stop, and other stops on that El Cap bus Line, runs from AT LEAST the 1st of April to the 1st of November, and maybe YEAR ROUND if possible. If feasible, take it one step further, and add a stop at Tunnel View too.”

Having the free shuttle bus serve Bridalveil Fall (and El Cap, and maybe Tunnel View) at a more comprehensive level will ease the parking at west end of valley, encourage use of green energy buses, park car once and ride for free. Also gives relief for people to use the bus when they can't get past El Cap Bridge to go further into the valley, because of traffic. They can take the bus into the east valley areas, and back to their cars too.” (Comment 14-2, Individual, Groveland, CA)

“Due to the high demand for parking, shuttle service to the Bridalveil area should be increased not only in frequency but the season should be extended. Every 30 minutes is not enough and the season should be extended to the shoulder months. Shuttle service during the holidays should also be considered. Not that this is part of this plan but an addition of a shuttle stop at Valley View would be nice.” (Comment 15-8, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

“Lastly, if the Bus doesn't go by this area, why not? Update the route and add a stopping area. People are easy to move via a bus and parking demands are also reduced, especially in small areas like Bridalveil Falls.” (Comment 19-7, Individual, Coarsegold, CA)

Traffic/Congestion (BVFR6200)

Concern 21: The National Park Service should reduce vehicle congestion and traffic.

Representative quote(s):

“... converting the single two way entrance to a one way entrance and exit model would significantly reduce vehicle congestion on the Wawona road and within the existing parking area.” (Comment 16-2, Sierra Club, El Dorado Hills, CA)

“Please do not encourage more traffic by providing more parking. An increase of traffic will have negative environmental impact.” (Comment 8-4, Individual, Fresno, CA)

“My concern is the congestion at the intersection of the Wawona Rd. and the South rd. I have voiced my concerns to past superintendents though the following suggestions;

1. Make the Bridal Veil to Pohona Bridge two way. This would alleviate the unnecessary longer drive across El Capitan Bridge and through the dangerous passage through El Capitan Meadow due to parked cars and spectators emerging into the road way for those visitors who are passing through to Hwy 140 or the Big Oak Flat Rd.

2. Consider a round-about at the Bridal Veil/Wawona intersection.

3. Day use of the Valley floor will have to be instituted.” (Comment 11-2, Individual, Fish Camp, CA)

“Please look into solving the huge traffic issue at the bridalveil falls parking lot turn in. We were waiting for over An hour in our vehicle on may 20th at 11 am in order to leave the park out hwy 41. The problem was visitors trying to turn left going uphill into the already full parking lot mid day. It seems like a fix to this roadway congestion area would be to not allow that left turn or to provide even just an additional 50 feet of area to the right of the lane to allow for drivers to move past the visitors attempting a left turn.” (Comment 17-1, Individual, Oakhurst, CA)

Parking (BVFR6300)

Concern 22: The National Park Service should limit parking.

Representative quote(s):

“It would be lovely if the streetside parking were limited or even removed to assist incoming traffic...” (Comments 12-2, Individual, Portland, OR)

“If parking is increased, I hope there will be a respect for the footprint size and attention paid to the circulation pattern.” (Comment 12-7, Individual, Portland, OR)

“And please, don't allow too many (if any) huge tour busses to stop on roadsides and limit the amount of bus parking in the lot.” (Comment 12-8, Individual, Portland, OR)

“A reduction in a comparable number of day-use parking spaces in other Valley locations should be identified in the final EA document.” (Comment 16-3, Sierra Club, El Dorado Hills, CA)

Concern 23: The National Park Service should increase parking due to high demand.

Representative quote(s):

“Bridalveil Straight: This has been a nightmare since the viewing area across the road for El Cap was constructed. Due to the lack of parking, cars are double parked or partially block the lanes when people try to park their cars in too small of spots and part of their cars stick out into the lanes. Lanes are also partially blocked when people park in areas not designated for parking.” (Comment 15-10, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

“The parking lot is poorly designed and is too small for the demand. I suggest moving the huge dumpsters that are in the lot area to another location and use that area for more parking spaces.” (Comment 15-7, Individual, Los Angeles, CA)

“Providing an additional 16 parking spaces within the existing parking footprint . . . would significantly reduce vehicle congestion on the Wawona road and within the existing parking area.” (Comment 16-1, Sierra Club, El Dorado Hills, CA)

“Is there a Master Plan that covers cars and parking spots, size of spaces and scheduled asphalt maintenance repairs? This would assist to quantify how many spaces as well as how much expense lot should cost.” (Comment 19-2, Individual, Coarsegold, CA)

“I support a better organized, more efficiently designed parking area that could accommodate more vehicles.” (Comment 21-4, Individual, Mariposa, CA)

Concern 24: The National Park Service should improve traffic circulation to reduce congestion.

Representative quote(s):

“ENHANCEMENT OF THE PARKING AREA: CSERC encourages Park Planners to consider adding a second entrance to the parking area and enforcing one-way traffic through the parking lot to improve traffic flow in the lot as well as in the general area.

The creation of a left turn lane for drivers on Highway 41 wishing to turn into the parking area could help alleviate congestion at the Southside Drive Highway 41 intersection. CSERC does raise the concern about vehicles attempting to circle the parking lot by turning left out of the parking lot onto Highway 41 to circle through the parking lot again. The Park might consider not allowing left turns out of the parking lot, or painting a "Do not block" section in the road to allow cars to turn left out of the parking lot when there are cars backed up at that intersection.” (Comment 18-4, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center (CSERC), Twain Harte, CA)

“Parking thought, if the goal includes adding more spaces then it might be required to expand the Valley Loop turn out lanes. This would allow buses more area to park, and additional area for cars. Turning left into the parking lot (Hwy 41 South, to Fresno) is not a good idea. Creating a turn lane into lot from Hwy 41 (into valley) is a great idea. Traffic analysis for this area might reveal that most cars currently parked in lot come from Fresno area, thus keep the flow moving. As cars exit lot, into valley, they should merge into Valley Loop flow. Cars already in Valley will park East of the Hwy 41 merge area (into the expanded parking lane on Southern side of Valley loop.

Because the falls are near road and pedestrian friendly, the total "stop" time shouldn't be very long.” (Comment 19-5, Individual, Coarsegold, CA)

Bicycles (BVFR6400)

Concern 25: The National Park Service should consider bicycle access at Bridalveil Fall.

Representative quote(s):

“The Valley lacks a bicycle circulation plan and defined pathways to the Valley venues. Bridalveil Falls is one place that needs access via bicycles. Many visitors bring or rent bicycles and prefer them to auto travel in the Valley. This is a long known fact and we would suggest incorporating such a plan into this project.” (Comment 22-1, Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition, Newport Beach, CA)

Other Comments (BVFR7000)

Concern 26: The National Park Service should identify the funding source and the total cost for the project.

Representative quote(s):

“Further study and planning of this project is a waste of time and taxpayer monies, of course unless your a Federal Employee working on this project. How much did the initial study cost the taxpayer? Please respond to this Comment.” (Comment 5-5, Individual, Columbia, CA)

6.0 OUT OF SCOPE CONCERNS

Four correspondences without substantive comments were submitted for consideration. These letters will remain as part of the Administrative Record for this project.

Appendix A: Index of Commenters

TABLE A-1. LIST OF COMMENTERS

First Name	Last Name	Organization	City, State
N/A	N/A	Unaffiliated	CA
N/A	N/A	Unaffiliated	Danville, CA
Annette	Catamec	Unaffiliated	Mariposa, CA
Kathleen	Rabeneau	Unaffiliated	Copperopolis, CA
James	Kirk	Unaffiliated	Columbia, CA
Stephanie	Bowen	Unaffiliated	Groveland, CA
Beverly	Williams	Unaffiliated	Ahwahnee, CA
Lachea	Deamicis	Unaffiliated	Fresno, CA
N/A	N/A	Unaffiliated	Exeter, CA
N/A	N/A	Unaffiliated	Danville, CA
Don	Harter	Fish Camp Volunteer Fire Association	Fish Camp, CA
Glenn	Scotfield Williams	Unaffiliated	Portland, OR
David	Furry	Unaffiliated	Groveland, CA
Carolyn	Botell	Unaffiliated	Groveland, CA
N/A	N/A	Unaffiliated	Los Angeles, CA
Alan	Carlton	Sierra Club	El Dorado Hills, CA
John	King	Unaffiliated	Oakhurst, CA
John	Buckley	Central Sierra Environmental Resources Center	Twain Harte, CA
Todd	Jackson	Unaffiliated	Coarsegold, CA
Multiple	Multiple	Scoping Meeting Questions	Yosemite National Park, CA
Randy	Fong	Unaffiliated	Mariposa, CA
Brian	Ouzounian	Yosemite Valley Campers Coalition	Newport Beach, CA